TELOS

umber 39 Spring 1979

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on the Occasion of his 50th Birthday

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INTRODUCTION

June 19, 1979, marks the 50th birthday of Jürgen Habermas. Festschrifts *are usually reserved for later birthdays, and are most successful when the honored thinker is so advanced in years as to be beyond influence and open only to honors. Fortunately, Habermas is still too young and too intellectually alive merely to be honored. Thus, what follows is a sample of his latest work, an interview with him that develops some of the political implications of his theses, two reviews of books dealing with related topics, and an exchange on the significance of the transformation he has made in the structure and content of critical social theory. Further contributions will be printed in the next issue.*

"History and Evolution," written in 1976 in response to an article by Niklas Luhmann, was omitted from the recent English selection of Habermas' work Communication and the Evolution of Society. *It is translated here because it demonstrates both the promise and the problems of Habermas' recent thinking on social evolution. Ranging over an enormous amount of material on the nexus of sociology and history, Habermas clarifies the relation between narrative history writing and historical research in order to indicate the role that evolutionary theories play with regard to each. Through this juxtaposition of history and functionalist theories of social evolution he attempts to show how his own proposals for a theory of social evolution with a special sensitivity to the evolution of normative structures could avoid some of the worst aspects of traditional "sociologizations of history." Habermas is especially concerned with avoiding the "trilemma" that has plagued most history writing: the irrationalism of classic historicism, the residual decisionism of systems theory, and the determination of all nomological theories of social change.*

Like most of Habermas' recent work, "History and Evolution" is an impressive attempt to inform critical theory with the results of empirical inquiries in contemporary social science — an effort that proceeds much in the spirit of Marx's critical appropriation of political economy. Yet, reservations remain about the success of Habermas' efforts, just as in recent years questions have been raised about the extent to which Marx managed to avoid being trapped by the very discipline he was criticizing. Can his phylogenetic projection of an ontogenetically constructed learning theory — extensively developed in Communication and the Evolution of Society *— be supported by comparative historical research? If it cannot, is the theory only normative, i.e., a model of the conditions for possible development? Is the effort to save the classical Marxian model of capitalist development with the addition of a second dimension of social evolution encompassing normative structures any more convincing than the now suspect unilinear model of the evolution of forces of production? Indeed, is the political realm, which has seen a variety of different institutions and traditions employed for the legitimation of authority, at all capable of being investigated along the lines of a theory of evolutionary stages? And, most pressingly, to what extent does Habermas' concentration on a general theory of social evolution represent a turning away from his earlier program of a philosophy of history with a practical intent?*

This question of the practical consequences of Habermas' evolutionary theory, which he alludes to briefly at the close of the essay, is taken up by Axel Honneth in his juxtaposition of Adorno and Habermas. Honneth argues that Habermas' recent work represents a return to the politically offensive stance of Horkheimer's critical theory of the 1930s that draws upon yet surpasses Adorno's more resigned posture and reliance

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on a model of immanent critique. In a rejoinder to Honneth, Schmidt suggests that Habermas has not been able to overcome the impasse which Adorno's work is claimed to represent.

Whatever is to be concluded about the status of Habermas' evolutionary turn, it should be obvious that, taken as a totality, Habermas' work represents a major achievement. He has called into question the traditional Marxist clichés that all too often pass as critical thinking without abandoning Marx's central commitment to an emancipatory social theory. He has brought critical theory face to face with the most recent work in philosophy and social science without abandoning his ties to a heritage of critical philosophy that stretches back to Kant and Hegel. Even if it has not always been possible to agree with him, it has never been difficult to admire him. With best wishes for his 50th birthday, we dedicate this issue to him.

During the last decade there has been a puzzling pacification of blacks in the United States. What makes this strange is the fact that their conditions have not improved and most programs to ameliorate their lot have either been useless or altogether counterproductive. In a systematic treatment of the history of blacks in the United States, Reed shows how the civil rights movement was closely connected with corporate efforts to homogenize Southern society, how it tended to delegitimate the black elite, and how the Black Power movement successfully re-established this elite in a sound position of power within the black community. Thus, the recent pacification is explained in terms of a successful strategy to manage the black community effectively while leaving all the main social problems largely unsolved.

Although considerable radical social research has focused on the means whereby monopoly capital has brought about the homogenization, consumerization and general depoliticization of American society after the New Deal, there has not been much attention paid to the role of the Supreme Court in this process. If anything, liberal interpretations of the role of the judiciary have tended to stress the extent to which the court has spearheaded changes in many social areas. Roelofs' analysis questions accounts of this type and shows how the Supreme Court has actually paved the way for capitalist rationalization of social relations.

Both the "young" Lukács of History and Class Consciousness *and the "old" Lukács of the* Aesthetics *and* Social Ontology *have been discussed in detail. The period in between, on the other hand, has remained relatively obscure. In his "Lukács in Weimar," Feher closely examines Lukács' writings and politics during this phase and attempts to relate them to the limited options open to intellectuals at that time. Other articles, by Beilharz and Biro, attempt respectively to show how Trotsky's position shares all the shortcomings of orthodox Marxism and what Eisenstein had in mind when he wanted to make* Capital *into a film.*

In the Notes and Commentary section, in addition to the previously mentioned Habermas interview, Vajda describes the nature of the Kadar regime in Hungary as a potential alternative to bureaucratic centralist regimes of Eastern Europe. His answer, of course, is that it is not really an alternative, but merely a variation. Denitch discusses the problems faced by Eurocommunist parties in coming to grips with the Russian question; and Bobbio attempts to dissociate socialism from Marxism in terms of the proposals of the Italian Socialist Party. In the review section, besides the already mentioned pieces dealing with Habermas, Zukin and Bain respectively review works dealing with Eastern Europe and China.

Andrew Arato *Paul Piccone* *James Schmidt*

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HISTORY AND EVOLUTION*

by Jürgen Habermas

The incorporation of the terminology and hypotheses of the social sciences into the writing of history has, with some delay in West Germany, led to a "sociologization of the writing of history."[1] On this level, the relation between history and sociology is in flux. But historians' receptivity stops short of what Luhmann calls "sociology's real theoretical contribution to history," i.e., a theory of social evolution, admittedly still in its first stages of delineation.[2] Parallels on the level of the history of ideas can be seen in the German historical school's dispute with the Hegelian philosophy of history, especially with sociological theories of development (from Marx to Spencer). Meanwhile, the political biases of historicism have been so well analyzed that the methodologically veiled resistance to the distortions of social science has vanished — though the antagonism between universal history and developmental theory cannot be bridged.

Ernst Schulin closes his instructive survey of contemporary accounts of universal history with the statement that world history is no longer understood as a continuum, as a unitary course or process from the beginnings to the present.[3] Evolutionary conceptions of history are a thing of the past. Schulin grants validity to two legitimate approaches to universal history: the typological comparison of general structures in the tradition of Max Weber, Otto Hintze, Marc Bloch, Barrington Moore, etc.; and the writing of history that concentrates spatio-temporally on particular civilizations (and their exchange) while at the same time studying worldwide interdependencies and intrasystematic dependencies; Islamists such as Grousset, Schaeder and Hogdson are examples of this. Franz Georg Maier comes to the same conclusion. The only methodologically unquestionable approach to universal

*Originally published in *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, II:3 (1976). This was in reference to N. Luhmann's essay in the same issue bearing the same title. Translated from the German by David J. Parent.

1. Cf. the anthologies edited by H.U. Wehler, *Geschichte und Psychoanalyse* (Cologne, 1971), *Geschichte und Soziologie* (Cologne, 1972), *Geschichte und Oekonomie* (Cologne, 1973); also a special issue of the *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie*, edited by P. Ludz: *Soziologie und Sozialgeschichte* (Opladen, 1972); E. Schulin, "Rückblicke auf die Entwicklung der Geschichteswissenschaft," in E. Jäckel and E. Weymar, eds., *Die Funktion der Geschichte in unserer Zeit* (Stuttgart, 1975), pp. 11ff.; R. Vierhaus, "Geschichtswissenschaft und Soziologie," in G. Schulz, *Geschichte heute* (Göttingen, 1973), pp. 69ff. For older literature (until 1966), cf. my report on the literature, *Zur Logik der Sozialwissenschaften* (Frankfurt, 1970), pp. 91ff.

2. T. Parsons, *Societies, Evolutionary and Comparative Perspectives* (Englewood Cliffs, 1966); G. Lenski, *Human Societies* (New York, 1970); S.N. Eisenstadt, *The Political System of Empires* (New York, 1963); W. Zapf, ed., *Theorien des sozialen Wandels* (Cologne, 1969); K. Eder, *Die Entstehung staatlich organisierter Gesellschaften* (Frankfurt, 1976). On earlier literature: H.P. Dreitzel, ed., *Sozialer Wandel, Zivilisation und Fortschritt als Kategorien der soziologischen Theorie* (Neuwied, 1967).

3. E. Schulin, ed., *Universalgeschichte* (Cologne, 1974). Introduction, pp. 11ff. Cf. also A. Heuss, *Zur Theorie der Weltgeschichte* (Berlin, 1968).

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history is, for him, the typological comparison of similar structures and sequences of events in the various areas of history and the observation of contacts, relations, and possible interaction contexts among them.[4] The quest of universal history for general structures and patterns of events has, according to two authors, a heuristic function of providing concepts and comparative perspectives for global history writing. They do not consider that the same method can also serve in the discovery of societal universals for a theory of development. Evolutionistic approaches strike them as hybrid forms of universal history — "universal history as applied philosophy of history: total designs of a historical development of mankind which seek to encompass the totality of individual sequences of events in time and space and at the same time claim to interpret the direction and meaning of the historical process."[5]

Before we join Luhmann in urging historians to cooperate, to take the leap from typological, comparative universal history to developmental theory, we should study the systematic reasons for possible hesitation. It is useful to distinguish here between historical *research* and history *writing*. Historical descriptions in principle have a narrative form; they are tied to the frame of reference of narrated stories. The knowledge that the historian uses for his description is, it is true, acquired discursively in obtaining and preparing data, choosing theoretical points of view and concepts, applying hypotheses, checking interpretations, etc. The historico-philological research methods of source critique, comparison, hermeneutics, etc., which reached their peak in the 19th century and have since been complemented by a social-science repertory, characterize the activity of the historian in his role as historical researcher and not as a writer of history. Historical research plays an instrumental role. It does not have to serve the purposes of history writing; as social research it can just as well be used to check (and further develop) theories in the social sciences. In this regard historical research is a beneficial corrective of the temporal, regional and factual provincialism of the dominant form of social research.

The dual methodological role of historical research has become clear especially in discussions of the relation between quantitative economic history and economic theory.[6] A "retrospective econometrics" does not become a new kind of economic history writing by merely drawing upon historical data to validate theory. In his role as empirical social researcher, the historian can also apply his methods to constructing an economic theory extending to historical periods. But the historian retains his role of history-writer only as long as he applies these or similar theories within the framework of a narrative, in order to explain a sequence of events in narrative form. Pierre Vilar therefore correctly opposes a misleading linguistic usage: "Would it not

4. F.G. Meier, "Das Problem der Universalität," in Schulz, pp. 84ff.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 92f.
6. Cf. the second part of Wehler, *Geschichte und Oekonomie*, pp. 143ff., especially the contributions by Marczewski and Vilar.

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be more accurate to say, instead of quantitative history, retrospective econometrics, which stands in the service of economic analysis and uses the historical method in its elaboration?"[7]

I refer to the dual methodological role of historical research because the relation between history and sociology raises different problems depending on which aspect determines the perspective. For the sociologist, the historian's offer to assume diachronic social research is methodologically unproblematic but in actuality awkward, since this can demonstrate the provincial narrowness of application in many theories that claim universal validity. For the historian, on the other hand, the (always modest) contribution of the social sciences is methodologically not without problems, because in writing history he must apply the social science terms and hypotheses in a narrative, i.e., he must theoretically expand the common-sense basis of narrative explanation without abandoning the narrative structure. If he did abandon the narrative frame of reference, the historian would have to give up his role as history writer.

Now it seems to me that the historians' reservations against contributions by a theory of social evolution (still in its beginnings) are, in one respect, well founded. If one does not merely enlist the aid of historical research for a theory of social evolution, which is inevitable, and if, on the contrary, one applies developmental theory in the form of universal history writing, then confusions result, which are subject to the familiar objections against the objectivism of philosophy of history. Historico-philosophical thought-configurations result precisely from the projection of a theory of development to the plane of narrative, in this case of universal-historical description. Therefore, the offer of cooperation may, in the case of evolutionary theory, be meant only one-sidedly. Certainly, the empirical basis for such a theory cannot be absolutely assured without historical *research*; but this does not mean that the theory of evolution can be applied in the *writing* of history. I would like to prove this thesis in the following paragraphs.

The line of argumentation will be complicated by the fact that the evolutionary theory that Luhmann proposes makes very weak explanatory claims. This weak version of a theory of development almost seems to call for complementary historical explanations, because it cannot itself answer genetic questions. My article therefore has the twofold task of clarifying the relation between evolutionary theory and history writing and of at least sketching an alternative concept to Luhmann's theory of evolution. The following argumentative steps will accomplish this goal:

I. The sociologization of event-oriented history writing does not (as many historians still fear) lead to a concept of eventless history incompatible with narrative structures.

II. Even rational models can be applied narratively in history writing; but as soon as they are advanced as paradigms for a general theory of society (and no longer remain restricted to particular tasks or systems), sociological theory

7. *Ibid.*, p. 180.

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and history writing become incompatible — this also applies to theories of social evolution.

III. The division of labor between sociology and history foreseen by Luhmann can be explained by the specific weaknesses of an independent functionalism. Instead of this, the concept of causality and the connection between system-theory and action-theory should be so conceived that the theory of evolution need not throw its own burden of explanation onto history's shoulders.

IV. The alternative concept of a theory of evolution is based on assumptions about universal structures of consciousness and levels of learning scaled according to the logic of development; that will be illustrated by the example of the transition to the modern age.

V. The inconsistencies (*aporia*) of the philosophy of history result from the attempt to transpose the theory of development into a writing of universal history. A theory of evolution must not be expected to fill the role of a theory of history, because history is, as such, not theoretical. Evolutionary theory finds its application not in history writing but in practical discourse.

I. History writing moves within a narrative frame of reference. Numerous prominent attempts have been made to reconstruct this framework: from hermeneutics (Dilthey, Heidegger) via phenomenology (Husserl, Schütz) and symbolic interactionism (Mead, Goffmann) to ethnomethodology (Garfinkel, Cicourel) and to analytical theory of language and action (Wittgenstein, Danto). I will restrict myself to recalling a few *basic concepts*. These describe (a) the intersubjective structures of *subjects* capable of language and action, language and other symbolic *means of communication*, intentional *statements* as well as instrumental or social actions, expressive gestures, etc., action-*situations* with their cultural-world dimension and their *non-normative peripheral conditions*; (b) the normative structures of institutions and *norms* of action, decisional maxims, *value systems*, cultural contents and stocks of tradition in general, *world-view* structures, etc.; and finally, (c), structures of subjectivity: interpretations of situations and orientations of actions, and *intentions*, experiences, motives, etc. However we reconstruct this intuitively mastered system of basic concepts, the history writer must move in this system when he both describes and explains a context of events narratively. The historian masters these basic concepts by virtue of the competence which he (independently of his professional expertise) has as a subject capable of language and action; he shares this competency with all other adult members of his society.

As the historian narrates a history, he forms statements in these basic concepts. Temporal structures especially can be read from such narrative statements. I recall especially a few findings of the analytical theory of history.[8]

8. C. Danto, *Analytical Philosophy of History* (Cambridge, 1965); cf. Habermas, *Logik der Sozialwissenschaften*, pp. 266ff.; H.M. Baumgartner, *Kontinuität und Geschichte* (Frankfurt, 1972), pp. 249ff.

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(a) A narrative describes events as occurrences that receive their significance in the framework of a *history*. A history is composed of interactions; it is enacted and endured by at least one person acting — the person who acts is, as the author of a history, also "entangled" in it. A history falls into episodes; it is delimited by episodes with which it begins and ends. The narrated events have continuity through the meaning that they receive in the biographical and supra-subjective vital contexts of the individuals and groups involved. Actions and events are explained with reference to situative peripheral conditions with the help of norms and values, or respectively of intentions and motives for action.

(b) Narrative statements refer to at least two *time-different events*, whereby the earlier event E1 is described with reference to the later event E2. Consequently, narrative statements describe an event with attributes under which it could not have been observed. The historian describes an event not as an eyewitness, but as a late-comer; the narrator does not have the role of a chronicler, he uses contemporary observations only as documents. An event is described using attributes which could neither have been observed by eyewitnesses (as a presently occurring episode) nor have been told by the participants themselves (immediately after the end of the episode). Even in the borderline case of autobiography, where narrator and participant are the same person, the *difference of time horizons* remains; the *past* present, past and future (of an earlier biographical condition) define a different narrator-perspective than the *present* present, past and future (of the author as he writes his autobiography). With the change of time horizon, the narrator-perspective also shifts.

(c) The historian, by distinguishing between the time horizon from which he is narrating and the time-horizon in which a participant has experienced the narrated history (and from which he would himself have told it), also takes into account the *difference of meanings* which the described event has for him as a historian and had for the one who took part in it. Thus the historian by no means assumes a neutral standpoint from which he can describe the episodes "as they were." Rather, he depends on the selection of the respective frame of interpretation in which history E1 is embedded, or which history of E1 is told. The narrative which a participant could have given after the end of the episode in which he was involved is privileged, compared with the narratives of non-participants or of later generations, only insofar as it contains eyewitness observations, and thus has documentary value. However, it has no privileged rank as a narrative. It depends in turn on the historian's decision how he ranks the various *pregiven* narrations of episode E1 (which relate to ever different later E2, E3, ... En), so that his own narrative is complex enough to explain both the historical event and the *history of the tradition* of this event narratively.

(d) The *continuity of a history* is, in a certain way, first constituted by the narrative itself. However, the narratively produced continuity of the narrated episodes is based on the unifying force of the vital contexts in which the events

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acquired their relevance for participants before the historian comes along. The intuitively convincing model for this pregiven unity is the identity of the self in the course of its biographical conditions — whereby the unity of the life-history in turn ensues from the series of narrative constructions which brings the self into a hierarchic order.[9] On the other hand, it must not be overlooked that the historian, by his choice of an interpretative frame, decides on the beginning and end of a history, i.e., he decides what is to be regarded as a *period* in which the relevant events are understood as elements of a single, narratively produced context. These options are significant for history writing and for the historical consciousness of contemporary society, because the sorts of attributes that stamp collective identities are established by adherence to or critical detachment from a tradition. (A good example is Blumenberg's tradition-critical study of legitimacy in the modern period.)[10]

(e) While theoretical statements permit the derivation of conditioned predictions of *events that will occur in the future,* narrative statements can deal only with *past events.* Every reference-event E2 lies after the depicted event E1, but before the time of the narrative itself. The choice of the frame of interpretation, i.e., the decision to narrate a particular history among the many possible ones about E1, is also dependent on the narrator's interpretation of the future, i.e., on his expectations of future events. The narrator's anticipations are not part of the narrated history, but of the situation of the hermeneutic point of departure. The horizon of expectations guiding the narrator's interest cannot at the same time determine the construction of a history and be its content. The narrator's anticipations are of significance to the narration perspective, but *the history itself remains retrospective.* The propositional content of such anticipations can indeed be identical with the content of *another* history. But its construction would in turn be determined by the narrator's anticipations of this future history. This has consequences for the time-structure of the concept of history. If we count as history all, but also only, those episodes which managed to be told (and to be handed down by tradition) up to the respective present point in time, then the concept of a "future history" is inconsistent. We could anticipate future events, but not as historical. We could probably fictionally assume the standpoint of future historians and from their now anticipated horizon of expectation understand

9. H.M. Baumgartner would like to understand historical continuity solely as a formal quality of the narrative construction; he insists that "historical continuity means an autonomous form-giving which neither can be derived from an identical subject enduring in time nor be a reproductive depiction thereof.... Temporal duration of a person, an event, is indeed a prerequisite in the substratum of history but not an ingredient of history and of its very continuity" (*ibid.*, pp. 299f.). Baumgartner does not consider that narratives not only organize the stories that the historian tells but also those that the historian presupposes as stories: the historian finds a preconstituted, in fact narratively pre-constituted field of objects. Thus history is an objective life context that is not "theoretically" constructed for the first time by the history writer. The history writer's constructions, rather, are added to the respective traditional constructions. Cf. my Dilthey interpretation in *Knowledge and Human Interests* (Boston, 1971), pp.140-160; also R. Koselleck, "Darstellung, Ereignis, und Struktur," in *Schulz,* pp. 307ff.

10. See the revised version: H. Blumenberg, *Der Prozess der theoretischen Neugierde* (Frankfurt, 1973); Blumenberg, *Säkularisierung und Selbstbehauptung* (Frankfurt, 1974).

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our future as their (future) past. A corresponding history of future pasts would, however, be fictitious, not a historical but a futuristic novel. Then the idea of a history of all possible histories, i.e., the hypothetical anticipation of history as a whole or the assumption of a totality of history, is incompatible with the narrative structure of histories.[11] Universal history too must limit itself to the reconstruction of the past; it has no prognostic content.

With these basic concepts of action theory and formal time-structures of narration (narration as the construction of histories; time-difference of events and difference of time-horizon of the narrator and what he narrates; time-perspective linkage of the narrative to the hermeneutic point of departure; continuity as a narration construct; retrospectivity of the narrative), the narrative reference system is adequately characterized for our purposes. First I wish only to show that a sociologized history writing still moves within this frame of reference. In this regard I by no means consider sociology and history to be "incommensurable." The contrary thesis is represented by Tenbruck, who, making himself as a sociologist into an impressive advocate of history writing, holds the thesis that a sociology that aims for "eventless sequences of social conditions" suggests an idea of social change that is incompatible with history. I document this position with an extensive quotation because it expresses the unfounded but still widespread fears of many historians.

"For it is the aggregative perspective which evinces the idea of events whose exclusion from discussion is characteristic of the de-historicization of the image of history. For classically, history, not by chance, begins with occurrences whose particular character as events is directly felt not only because of their significance for society, but also because of the elements of surprise precisely in their significance, as for instance wars, revolutions, treaties, conflicts, measures, foundings of religions, etc. These characteristics are typically missing in aggregated phenomena and processes: both the compulsion to identify the acting individuals instead of giving their summary relation to collectivities and the time-space specificity, indeed, the trait of being emphasized, depend on them insofar as they are not predictable in the sense of regularities and constants always fixed by aggregate data. In other words, they claim our attention because of their own unpredictability (or that of their effects). We experience and classify them as events because they do not fit into the aggregative logic of expectations; here the social stratification of action is different from occurrences, which we can describe aggregatively. Thus in the former case we have essentially anonymous occurrences in the sense of average, regular activity in certain groups. In the latter case, there are identifiable individuals as actors. Moreover, in the

11. Baumgartner, pp. 277ff. I accept Baumgartner's critique of my former view (*ibid.*, pp. 239ff.) insofar as I see that the evolutionary aspect (history of the human race under the idea of a process of education) and the historical aspect (world history as a narrative construction) must be carefully kept apart analytically because otherwise the confusions studied below in Section V can result. On the other hand, I would like to hold to the objectivity of the historical life context (cf. note 9) and not reduce the continuity of narrated stories to formal conditions of the narrative.

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former case, changes occur mostly in the stratum of values and meanings, that is, below the level of conscious, exerted action. When they do reach this threshold, they still bear traits of socially predetermined behavior patterns in their mass, average and repetitive nature. On the other hand, in the latter case of exceptional actions, the lack of a pregiven social pattern demands a particular exertion and action from the actors and a particular effort to understand their causes and effects from the observers; here, typical, gradual changes with extension in time, whose boundaries and course remain spatio-temporally vague; there, typically sudden events, precisely located in time and space. In short, we have on the one hand events that are based on the dissemination of a synchronically and diachronically similar behavior, and in this sense repetitive, and on the other hand events which could in a very specifically designated sense be called unique. Thus we reach one of the points where the classical discussion between sociology and history writing went wrong.... Sociology and history writing start off with two different components of reality and have therefore from the very beginning been under pressure to eliminate the respectively extraneous component. It is well known how persistently historians refused to incorporate aggregate data systematically. But the fact that the sociologists *vice-versa* followed the same prescription and tended to disregard events totally is forgotten."[12]

Tenbruck was schooled in the dualistic conceptualization with which Southern German neo-Kantianism tried to comprehend the cultural sciences methodologically. Accordingly, he stresses the complementary aspects of reality, among which event-oriented history writing and sociological theory of action respectively study the same object. But it by no means follows from the description that a sociologizing of event history must lead not only to a different type of history writing, but also to *something other* than history writing — namely, to an unhistorical concept of history as social change. As long as sociological research moves in the framework of action theory, which it shares with historical research, sociological descriptions and explanations can be incorporated without breach into the narrative frame of reference. In their introductory essay to the anthology *Führen und Geschichte* (Leadership and History), Cahnman and Boskoff correctly state: "If we once again consider the literature, then we note a generally unknown fact: the relative ease with which historians and sociologists were able to apply the terms, data, theories and general methods of their respective counterpart."[13] The historian does not abandon the narrative frame of reference in describing historical events on the analytical plane of sociological terms and hypotheses. I do not want to analyze the "narrative application" of social-science theories in detail, but to illustrate it by a few examples.[14]

12. H. Tenbruck, "Die Soziologie vor der Geschichte," in Ludz, pp. 29ff.

13. W.J. Cahnman and A. Boskoff, "Soziologie und Geschichte," in Wehler, *Geschichte und Soziologie*, p. 168.

14. Literature on the problem of explanation in history writing has become very compendious since the discussion opened by W. Dray on the applicability of the Hempel-Oppenheim model in history writing. Two newer contributions: K. Acham, "Zum wissenschaftlichen Status und zur

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To the extent that history is sociologized, *collective actors* do indeed replace the great individuals; but this does not affect the structure of the narrative. Ability to act is an interaction concept — individuals too act only as members or representatives of the groups to which they belong. Collectives in turn "act" only in a figurative sense, but they embody the sole network of interaction within which actions attributable to individuals can occur. In the first chapter of H.-U. Wehler's *Geschichte des deutschen Kaiserreichs 1871-1918*, considered a paragon of sociologized history writing, only isolated personal names are given: a few (Bruck, Schwarzenberg) to designate administrative periods; others as examples of a fusion of elites (Miquel, Bamberger). Only Bismarck appears in the narrative role of the active subject who makes history. Nonetheless the narrative reference system is retained. Collective actors assume the author roles: the traditional ruling stratum of the noble landowners, the officer and administrative nobility defend their social and political privileges; the young industrial workers organize in parties and in the early forms of unions; the industrial bourgeoisie together with middle class liberal groups make political claims; the leadership groups implement a series of welfare measures for farmers, craftsmen, industrial workers and their children, etc.[15]

The situation is somewhat different with the priority given the analysis of *institutional systems* over the reporting of individual historical events, actions, decisions, etc. Actions and the norms regulating them stand in a complementary relation. The two elements cannot assume the same narrative role, but both are part of the reference system of the narrative. The two great episodes that Wehler describes in the third chapter of his book under the titles "The Bonapartist Dictatorship until 1890" and "The Permanent Governmental Crisis since 1890"[16] acquire a narrative context only against the background of the *political system* (which originated with the *Reichs*-constitution of 1871). Based on Marx's analysis of French Bonapartism, Wehler sees the Reich as a "Bonapartist dictatorial regime behind the facade of a rapid industrialization favorable to the traditional elites, and also of a military, semi-absolutistic, and pseudo-constitutional monarchy subject to partial modernization, and influenced in part by bourgeoisie and bureaucracy." The investigation of this system of institutions reveals the objective ranges of action that Bismarck first implemented in an

Pragmatik der Geschichtswissenschaften," in H. Lenk, ed., *Neue Aspekte der Wissenschaftstheorie* (Braunschweig, 1971), pp. 129ff.; K. Hübner, "Erkenntnistheoretische Fragen der Geschichtswissenschaften," in Jäckel and Weymar, pp. 41ff. I am speaking of a "narrative application of social-science hypotheses because I believe that historical explanations can be adequately analyzed only if the logical form of explanation is studied in combination with the object-constitutive basic concepts of historical depiction. For the present state of the discussion that was begun especially by G.H. von Wright's *Explanation and Understanding* (Ithaca, 1971), cf. now K.O. Apel, *Causal Explanation, Motivational Explanation, Hermeneutical Understanding*, ms. 1975.

15. H.-U. Wehler, *Das deutsche Kaiserreich 1871-1918* (Göttingen, 1973, 1975). The examples were taken from chapter 1, pp. 19-40.

16. *Ibid.*, pp. 63ff.

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authoritarian manner: e.g., a policy of Prussian hegemony over the other federated states; an energetic change of course in economic policy; a change of parliamentary supporters between 1876 and 1879; momentous social and economic imperialism in the 1880s, etc. The power vacuum which arose in these institutionally pregiven ranges of action after Bismarck's resignation explains Wilhelm II's behavior immediately after 1890, the rapid change of chancellors, the zigzag course of German politics, both domestic and foreign, the growth into independence of the bureaucracy, the increasing influence of competing key figures of the Prussian power elite (from Tirpitz to the managers of the economic associations), etc. Numerous episodes, actions and omissions of the political rulers are thus compared with one another by reference to the system of institutions of the *Reich* in the periods before and after 1890 and narratively depicted in their historical context.

In a sociologized history writing, moreover, cultural traditions are no longer taken cultural-historically at face value, but are studied in terms of their latent functions. The *ideology-critical treatment of ideas* also retains its reference to situations of interests, i.e., to motives of acting individuals and groups, and provides a narrative explanation of historical events. Thus Wehler explains the transformations from liberal to Imperial German nationalism by the stereotypes of enemies that nationalism produces and fixates. He shows how the nationalistic ideology is used in domestic policy to exclude Social Democratic, Catholic, Polish and left liberal enemies of the Reich.[17] This way, for example, the mobilization of a sufficient following of voters behind the government and the repression of any impending crisis of legitimation can be explained.

Finally there is the *preference for aggregate conditions* over historical events — a tendency on which Tenbruck primarily bases the incompatibility of sociology and history. But as long as the aggregate data serve to describe situations, they merely make peripheral conditions of social action more precise and do not at all require a concept of eventless social change incommensurable with the form of narrative depiction. To describe the initial situation of the new German Reich, Wehler presents trend data or time sequences almost exclusively for 30 pages. This permits discussion of the development of land prices, rising productivity in agriculture, growing credits of the state pension-fund banks, the length of the economic cycles, the emergence of an industrial reserve army, the length of the economic cycles, the acceleration of industrial-economic investments, the expansion of the capital market, the emergence of leading industrial sectors, the development of a system of large banks, etc. The purpose of this socio- and economic-historical description is to make the history of the establishment of the Reich understandable as a reaction to pressures resulting from a relatively rapid spurt of capitalist development from an agrarian to an industrial economy. The "history" which Wehler narrates in this first chapter is the emergence of the Reich in the aftermath of three hegemonial wars that had the function of

17. *Ibid.*, pp. 107ff.

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legitimating domination against the emancipatory drive of bourgeois strata and of an incipient industrial working class. The theme of the narrative remains a context of action, namely, the Bismarckian-Prussian policy, which "under the pressure of socio-economic, politically motivated, legitimation pressures began a 'forward retreat' and in the military continuation of the revolution from above gave the Germans the Reich after three wars as a 'small' German Great Prussia."[18]

These exemplary observations are supposed to document the fact that a stronger sociologization does lead to a change in history writing, but not to the shattering of its categorical framework. Certainly, history as a social science leads away from the political history of the actions of leaders and governments in a history of ideas framework, to economic and social history, in which cultural history is also integrated. But it remains, as before, narratively organized. The shift of emphases is explained by a sociologization that stresses the activities of collective actors, gives priority to analyses of institutions, expands the history of ideas into a critique of ideology and takes more strongly into account anonymous, quantitatively registered social processes. Thus the explanatory function of the narrative emerges more clearly than its descriptive one. But in all narratives, peripheral conditions in connection with norms and values (or respectively, intentions and dispositions to action) have the explicatory value of causes. These components, which play the explanatory role (*explanans*) in narrative elucidations, acquire, in more strongly sociologized history writing, and compared with the things to be explained (*explananda*), i.e., the historical events, a weight of their own that they did not have in the conventional history writing of the 19th century.

II. The question now is not so much the sociologization of history in general, but in particular: whether, and if so how, a theory of social evolution can be combined with history writing. Social scientific theories can be included in historical descriptions as long as they extend to particular areas of application; but is that true also for a general theory of society? I do not, in this context, want to deal with social-science theories of behavior, because these reductionistically subvert the narrative form of historical depiction (hypotheses of this kind, insofar as they are developed in strictly behavioristic basic concepts, cannot be applied narratively, i.e., used for explanations within the narrative frame of reference). Instead, I want to refer to three *rational models* and the corresponding theories to characterize further stages of the sociologizing of history and to identify the threshold where the narrative structure is broken. By rational models I understand all procedures that arrange historical events on idealized paths of problem-solving. The point of departure for a thus rationalized history is defined by a statement of the problem for which we can systematically give an infinite number of solutions (and functionally equivalent modes of solution). History itself then consists of episodes, evaluated by means of the underlying problem-solving

18. *Ibid.*, p. 39.

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pattern. It ends with an episode which brings about a successful solution or with the failure of the attempts at problem-solving. This significance of rational models does not include ideal types, in the sense of Max Weber (which like types of domination, religious community, urbanization, market forms, etc., serve for comparative processing of the material). On the contrary, it includes models of rational choice, rational reconstructions and system environment (*Umwelt*) models.

Lipset and Rokkan's model of democratization offers a good example for models of rational choice.[19] It can be applied to European nations whose formation into states began in the 16th and 17th centuries and, among other things, was characterized by struggles with the Roman Curia's supra-national claims to power. The model distinguishes four critical phases: Reformation, national revolution, industrial revolution and the so-called international revolution. The forms of the various political regimes are derived from the idealized event-sequences of the political struggle during these four periods. A model of decision is applied to the locations of the fronts, the alliances, strategies for victory and defeat in these struggles. It provides exactly seven collective actors with limited possibilities of choice for alliances. The problem to be solved is the formation of a national state with a representative form of government; the alternative paths for solving the problem are supposed to allow an explanation of the various national party- and election-systems. Every narrative contains at least implicit assumptions about problems, value orientations and motives of action of the parties involved. Models of decision merely make such assumptions explicit, of course under the presupposition that the thematized tasks permit systematic solutions and that the parties involved are disposed to purposive-rational activity. Such models thus stylize the decisions of strategically acting parties and are applicable only to the extent that their ideal presuppositions are fulfilled. They can be inserted into the categorical framework of history writing without difficulty, because a thus rationalized context of action can be *narrated.*

The other two rational models have a similarly unproblematic relation to the structures of narration *only* with certain restrictions. These restrictions show the limit of the integrative power of history writing as against sociology — a boundary that is attained precisely with the theoretical approach that seems to be "sociology's real theoretical contribution to history": the theory of social evolution.

I wish to speak of models of rational reconstruction (in our context) when at least one complex *learning process* can be systematically given for an innovative achievement. Such models play a role in many special histories. It has been customary in *histories of philosophy* since the days of Aristotle to depict one's own respective theory as the solution to a problem that has been brought closer to a solution step by step by one's predecessors. Hegel's conceptual virtuosity was shown not least of all by his writing the history of

19. S. Rokkan, "Models and Methods in the Comparative Study of Nation-Building," Background paper for a Preparatory Meeting on Problems of Nation-Building, UNESCO, Brussels, Sept. 24-25, 1967. Also in Zapf, pp. 228ff.

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philosophy as a whole so that it could be understood as a universal learning process leading to Hegel's own system of sciences. Similarly, Richard Krohner tried to show in the spirit of the master that Hegel's encyclopedia is the cogent result of a rationally reconstructed learning process that runs from Kant, via Fichte and Schelling, to Hegel. This mode of writing the history of philosophy achieved the rank of a "problem-historical method" (N. Hartmann). Just as a systematic history of the phenomenological movement is possible, so too is a systematic history of the *geographical discoveries* of the 15th and 16th centuries thinkable — the discovery of America in 1492, after all, stands in a long series of journeys of exploration whose results, in connection with Copernican astronomy, finally led to an empirically sufficiently precise and theoretically correctly plotted world atlas. The same would be true of a history of the discovery of atomic fission. In general, the *history of technology and science* is rich in monographs that could serve as examples of a rationally reconstructed history writing. In all these cases, despite the (more or less explicitly) underlying rational model that describes the task, the problem-solving and idealized learning-processes, it is a question of narrative descriptions. For they tell of historically remarkable tasks and of innovative attempts at solutions undertaken by identifiable persons or groups, partly with failure, partly with success. This historically momentous success or failure of learning processes is reflected in contexts of interaction that are described (and evaluated) with systematic reference to the underlying learning matrix. The narrative aspect thus resides in the fact that the learning subject, in certain situations, is enabled or driven to, or also misled and discouraged from, perceiving, processing, and finally solving new problems in an innovative way.

This narrative aspect, however, disappears to the extent that in the innovations to be described it is no longer a matter of particular, but of universal tasks. Let us assume that instead of rational history of individual technical or scientific innovations, the discovery of bronze metallurgy, the discovery of blood circulation, or the origin of the theory of relativity, the rational history of technology or of modern science, is to be told. Such a "history" could no longer be "told," in the strict sense, for the rational model that would have to be discovered for technology and modern science could no longer be arranged as a rational reconstruction of *special* tasks and *particular* learning processes.

At any rate, for technology and modern science as such, rational models could be constructed only under the precondition that development has reached a certain conclusion[20] and that essential new changes are out of the question. Moreover, these models would extend not to solutions of particular problems and to reconstructable learning processes but to general problem solving potentials and levels of learning.[21] Individual technical apparatuses

20. On the problems of a reconstructive history of science, cf. W. Diederich, ed., *Theorien der Wissenschaftsgeschichte* (Frankfurt, 1974).

21. As an illustration I refer to the theoretical program developed by C.F. von Weizsäcker, *Einheit der Natur* (Munich, 1971).

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and procedures or particular theories would, in this comprehensive context, necessarily be merely the exemplary expression of generative rules or generalized capacities, i.e., of general structures of awareness. Rational models of this kind would not reconstruct *just any* competence, but one of universal scope — generic competencies as claims to validity of technology or science are not epoch-dependent and culture-specific, but universally binding.

An innovation, such as a unified field theory, in the sense of Werner Heisenberg, closes off a series of "completed theories" and can no longer be understood as the solution to a particular task. Rather, it displays a fully developed competence unsurpassable in dimension and claiming universality. In such a case, the corresponding rational model (if it can be constructed) is no longer suited as foil for a narrative. Such a competence has no *history*, but a *development* (which takes place in the given case "logically," i.e., via reconstructable stages).[22] Every history is, in principle, open; it assumes that its theme can fall under a new light because of later events (and changed narrative perspectives). For the development of a competence whose possibilities of realization are transparent, there is on the contrary only one single correct theory — and whether an initially valid theory is replaced by a better one, depends neither on the progress of events nor on changed retrospectives. A history is, in principle, a context of interactions; in it actors create something through their activity. A competence, however, is *acquired*; structures of consciousness *emerge*, so that the degree of freedom posited with the ability to act and the alternatives of action that make a historical interest possible are not at all given. A narrative always deals with particular events; essentially individual-constants appear in it. A generic competence [*Gattungskompetenz*], however, which lays claim to universality does not even fall under the category of an event that could attract historical attention. Thus, the emergence of such a competence is only accidentally connected with identifiable persons and groups. These comprise the substratum of learning processes that are made possible by a corresponding learning level. This means that with the transition from rational reconstructions of limited innovative events to the developmental logic of a general competence, the boundary of the narrative reference system is excluded.

Similarly, the generalization of the system-environment model can initially be incorporated into narrative structures. Let us take as a prominent example of a historically applied system theory the branch of modernization research that deals with "political development," especially with processes of state- and nation-formation in the modern era.[23] Wehler has described why this

22. J. Piaget, *The Principles of Genetic Epistemology* (New York, 1972); on the application of his competency logic to the history of science, see his *Die Entwicklung der Erkennens* (Stuttgart, 1973), vols. I-III.

23. Cf. especially the works of the Committee on Comparative Politics of the Social Science Research Council under the chairmanship of L.W. Pye. The last volume of a long series of publications: C. Tilley, ed., *The Formation of the National States in Western Europe* (Princeton, 1975).

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approach can be of significance for a social-scientific history.[24] The model of the boundary maintaining system that survives in an exchange with a contingently changeable and hyper-complex social environment is presented as a rational model for historical processes to the extent that at least two preconditions are fulfilled: the identification (or determination) of system boundaries and of important substantive structures, and a sufficient operationalization of normative values or conditions of equilibrium. Then it is possible to single out reference problems that the system solves by adapting to variable environmental conditions, insofar as it changes internal conditions. Thus, the theories of political development (as usual in political sociology) regard the state (with the institutions of public administration and formation of political will) as a system in interaction with various contiguous fields (*Umwelten*), especially with the economic and socio-cultural systems. Nevertheless, a series of general problems emerges in this context. With the differentiation of a state organization the political system acquires the task of expressing and preserving the *identity* of the total societal system. Furthermore, the self-steering capacities of society are concentrated in the state, so that the political system takes on *regulatory functions* for the other areas of life. Finally, the means of political domination with which these tasks are fulfilled require the legitimation of the respective institutions of domination. These *general problems of the preservation of political systems* assume a special form in the course of modernization when other societal fields contiguous to the political system are affected by the transition to an industrialized economy by societal mobilization and by a dissemination of universalistic values. The form of collective identity which in modern societies best solves the problem of the allotment of system-members and thus best assures social integration is obviously the "nation." The form of government apparatus that can best satisfy an industrial society's need for order is a modern administration which mobilizes resources (taxes and labor force), assures the legal traffic of private persons, and masters collective tasks (infrastructure, military, etc.). The legitimation problems can finally be observed under the three aspects of the constitutional state (*Rechtsstaat*), democracy, and the welfare state.

The aforementioned modernization study distinguishes five *developmental problems of the modern state:* problems of identity, penetration, legitimation, participation and redistribution. They are normally solved by nation-building, construction of a modern administration, institutionalization of basic rights and a formal system of law, political democracy and the establishment of a system of social security (redistribution). This *functionalistic reference system* is obviously determined by the image that welfare-state mass democracies of a Western type have evoked in the mirror of American theories of the rule of democratic elites (Bachrach) in the 1950s and 1960s. From these goals, and with reference to modernization processes in fields contiguous to the political system, the five cited reference problems

24. H.-U. Wehler, *Modernisierungstheorie und Geschichte* (Göttingen, 1975).

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can be derived. These require an expansion of the state's taxing capacity, whereby functionally equivalent solutions based on institutional innovations can be identified: "New institutional forms for the treatment of a problem field evoke in history a trace with whose help the positional value of a particular problem can be determined at a particular point in time."[25] The empirical content of such a model must of course be shown in the historical application. This can, for example, be a matter of international comparison of functionally equivalent developmental variants of Western democracies or of the comparison of variants of the mature state of various democracies, or of the pathological development sequences of states that have either not mastered (at least) one of the developmental problems at all, or only inadequately, or too late, and therefore display disproportionate development patterns of partial modernization. The model has been set up for diagnostic purposes in regard to currently developing countries, because these externally triggered modernization processes are, to a high degree, "pathogenic" due to "bundling of problems," i.e., the simultaneous appearance of several problems.

Because this model has a clear normative reference and allows for an action-theory interpretation, it lends itself well to narrative description. The choice of the normative reference point "democratic nation state" or "welfare-state mass democracy" assures the narrative of a particular character. The place of the reference event E2 here assumes the normatively demarcated equilibrium condition of a problem-solving system. This system-reference readily allows for the *same* history to be relativized under *another* system reference (which appears more suitable in the light of new events, for instance, unforeseen crises). Interaction contexts can be incorporated into such a model without difficulty because the cited system problems are understood as tasks which are processed and solved (postponed) by acting elites (and non-elites). Pathological developments can be projected onto the plane of action via the insufficient learning capacity of elites. In applying the modernization study model of political development to the history of the German Reich, Wehler explicitly stresses both the normative and the action-theory interpretations: "The question is immediately raised, what is the goal of modernization, what possible learning goals on the thought horizon of the time should be strived for. A fundamental idea underlies our statements: according to which, at this time, the task was to approximately synchronize socio-economic change and the development of political institutions in their direction, to broaden and formally secure participatory rights and democratic legitimation of decisions, or else to expect to generate a dangerous tension-potential, a risky brittleness of the constitution, to fall into an excessive "learning-pathology" and thus perhaps to question the ability for development even in peace times. Certainly, industrialization and demo-

25. S. Verba, "Entwicklungskrisen und ihre Abfolge," in M. Jänicke, ed., *Politische Systemkrisen* (Cologne, 1973), p. 299. Cf. in the same volume the contributions of Huntington and Flanagan.

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cratization do not necessarily go together. The history of Germany, Japan, Russia and most developing countries shows this. It is correct, rather, that industrialization and bureaucratization are linked in functional dependency. Thus democracy is not a direct result of industrialization — however often industrial and democratic revolutions have appeared in combination since the 18th century — but the ever elusive result of political and social struggles to develop and preserve the most suitable constitution for industrial states. For a fundamentally democratic order seems best suited to give these countries that necessary elasticity of political institutions and that solid basis of legitimation in constructing the modern welfare state, without which the hard-to-solve basic crises inevitably take effect. Socio-political modernization can therefore not be separated from a democratic constitutional reality, and the judgment of social learning capacity will be measured by how far and how fast the socio-economic changes in the industrial world are met with the implementation of equal rights, transparency of decisions, democratic control of those in power, adequate provision for existence, etc., in brief: with the gradual realization of a democratic welfare state."[26] With an eye on the late effects of an unsuccessful modernization which materialized with the victory of fascism in Germany, Wehler concentrates his description of the Reich on problems that remained unsolved. But that they remained unsolved is attributed in narrative stance to the actors, for even structural barriers to learning can in a narrative frame of reference mean only the institutional solidifications of cumulative actions and omissions.[27]

A narrative application of system-environment models is possible as long as theory is not combined with attempted explanations of societal developments *solely on the basis of the dynamics of self-regulated systems* as opposed to situations and actions. Bendix expresses the historian's resistance when he refuses to explain the stability of societal structures with the equilibrium ideas of system theory: "I consider the term 'balance' to be unsuited for this purpose, because the social structure or the 'system' cannot keep itself in balance..., because it is men who attain or fail to attain a certain degree of stability by their actions, however conditioned.... From this point of view, the stability of a social structure is not a balance that can be attributed to a system but the result of constant effort to maintain stability."[28] Bendix's remark mixes reservations of methodological individualists with reservations of the action theorist; it is the latter that are of concern here. System-theoretical statements can, without violating narrative structures, enter into history writing as long as they stem from the system-theoretical formulation of partial problems, whose processing (via models of learning) can be interpreted in action-theory concepts, with reference to actors and therefore also narratively described. A general systems-theory of society and the corresponding functionalistic theory of development abandon this

26. Wehler, *Kaiserreich,* pp. 233ff.
27. *Ibid.*, pp. 228ff.
28. R. Bendix, "Die vergleichende Analyse historischer Wandlungen," in Zapf, p. 183.

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reference to action. Bendix's reservation applies to it: they evade a narrative application. "System" and "life-world" (or action) designate different paradigms; the possible correlation between the basic terms of systems- and action-theory is therefore a problem that has engaged sociology since its beginnings and until now has found only controversial solutions.[29] One strand of discussion today runs along the demarcation of systems and social integration. *Social integration* is considered the measure of stability of societal systems, obtained by identity-guaranteeing interpretation systems, value consensus, and the recognition of norms of action — *anomie* is the complementary concept (harking back to Durkheim) for conditions of social disintegration. *System integration*, on the contrary, is considered to be the standard for the control- and learning-capacities of a system in relation to the ever present need for steering in complex social environments. Of course, the same phenomena can also be regarded under these different analytical aspects. The social-scientific conceptual strategies differ, however, according to which aspect is relativized respective to the others. This has nothing to do with consideration of substratum categories (such as disposal over resources) in contrast to normative structures;[30] or with the distinction of control values from conditioning restrictions.[31] The decisive question is which paradigm is considered the leading one, according to which the other is redefined. I shall cite two examples for this.

Marx described the accumulation of capital in the circulation models of contemporary political economy, so as to enable a systems-theory reformulation of his assumptions about the fundamental value relations in different sectors over different periods.[32] At the same time, however, Marx traces the basic economic concept, value, back sociologically to the unity of use-value and exchange-value, established ultimately in the labor market through the institution of the labor contract. The value theory emerges as a system of classificatory rules that allows the translation of statements giving a systems-theory description of capitalist economic processes from steering (*Steuerung*) perspectives into statements about antagonistic relations between social classes: "capital" is as much a value term with which statements can be made on the analytical level of the economic system as it is a term expressing a class relation that can be analyzed with basic concepts of action theory. For research strategy, the value theory depicts problems of system integration on the level of social integration. Marx constructs the steering mechanism of

29. D. Lockwood, "Social Integration and System Integration," in G.K. Zollschan and W. Hirsch, eds., *Explorations in Social Change* (London, 1964), pp. 244-256; J.E. Bergmann, *Die Theorie des sozialen Systems von T. Parsons* (Frankfurt, 1967); J. Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis* (Boston, 1975); N. Mouzelis, "Social and System Integration," in *British Journal of Sociology* 25 (1974), pp. 395-409.

30. J. Ritsert, "Substratbegriffe in der Theorie des sozialen Handelns," in *Soziale Welt* 19 (1968), pp. 119-137.

31. T. Parsons, "Die jüngsten Entwicklungen in der strukturell-funktionalen Theorie," in *Kölner Zeitschrift...*, 16 (1964), pp. 30-49; Parsons, "An Approach to Psychological Theory in Terms of the Theory of Action," in S. Koch, *Psychology* (New York, 1959), I, 3, pp. 612-712.

32. C. Helberger, *Marxismus als Methode* (Frankfurt, 1972).

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exchange as a reciprocal relationship among interacting parties, in order to be able to reach through contexts to class struggles, i.e., to historically depictable interactions.

Parsons, on the other hand, tries to transform the framework of a theory of action extracted from Pareto, Durkheim, and Max Weber,[33] so that it fits into the system paradigm (which became clear only later in cybernetic models). In the "Working Papers,"[34] Parsons tries to use the basic systems- and action-theoretical concepts in succession by attempting to derive the four universal basic orientations of action (pattern variables) from the four basic functions of action-systems (A-G-I-L schema). The strategic significance is a systems-theoretical unification of the theory of society, so that the previously underlying problem of social integration can be redefined into the partial problem of the more comprehensive problematic of system-integration, i.e., of obtaining adequate steering capacity.

By programmatically taking the step to a general systems theory of society, Parsons must also replace history as the medium of change of societal systems with developmental processes. *History* is formed in the medium of actions and events, *system-development* takes place in the form of a structural expansion of steering capacities, intensification of complexity. The systems-theory of society, which claims universality, therefore requires a theory of social evolution as complement, because it can no longer relate to the directed processes of change as to a narratively constituted history. The idea that system-problems could be perceived (or at least vaguely felt) by historical actors, and either solved or not solved, is not permissible for analytical reasons, as soon as the system-environment model no longer applies only to particular contexts but is the basis of a general systems-theory. This makes the interactions, as well as the narrative structures under which these are thematized by the history writer, dependent on changes of condition of the respective system or on changes of system structure. Social evolution reaches right through history, it makes history into an epiphenomenon.

Parson's outline of a theory of social evolution shows how the anthropological and historical material is removed from its narrative contexts in order to serve as casuistic evidence for assumptions about "adaptive upgrading" or "enhancement of adaptive capacity" for increasing the complexity of social systems.[35] Luhmann has radicalized the Parsonian approach in at least the following respects:

(a) Luhmann dissolves the action-theoretical basic concepts into systems-theoretical ones; he no longer seeks, as does Parsons, to integrate them into a heterogeneous basic conceptual framework. To mention a few examples, he conceives "meaning" as a mode of selection making it possible to control actual selections by an array of visualized possibilities. He understands "action" as a selection process insofar as it can be assigned to an interaction

33. T. Parsons, *The Structure of Social Action* (Glencoe, Ill., 1949).
34. T. Parsons *et al.*, *Working Papers in the Theory of Action* (New York, 1953).
35. Parsons, *Societies.*

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system. "Interaction systems" are characterized by double contingency: the ego and the other person each see their own and the others' behavior respectively as the result of a contingent decision. "Communicative relations" serve to coordinate the self's and the other person's selective behavior and experience, whereby *language communication* at the same time makes possible and bridges high differences of selectivity. In these and in similar reformulations the language- and action-related basic concepts are thinned to the utmost by systems theory.

(b) Luhmann refines the sociological interpretation of systems theory. He distinguishes system-differentiation under points of view differentiating between social systems and natural environments, level differentiation (according to levels of system-formation — interaction, organization, society), and of internal differentiation (the formation of internal social environments through segmentation or functional specification).

(c) Luhmann improves the theory of symbolically generalized communications media, which Parsons had introduced. Language as the universal medium differentiates power, law, money, love, truth, etc., as media that are specialized for the transmission and reproduction of certain classes of selection achievements. They see to it that the selection offerings on the one side are not only understood by the other, but are also accepted. Luhmann has tried to systematize the various communications media by means of the relations between self-other person's experience-action.[36]

(d) Luhmann borrows from the theory of organic evolution three mechanisms that he interprets for the level of social evolution, as language (for the variation mechanism), as communications media (for the selection mechanism) and as achievements of system differentiation (for the stabilization mechanism). Language is supposed to generate variety because it disposes over a high "negation potential" (a formulation that has yet to be defined).

(e) Luhmann finally totalizes the claim of the systems theory of society by applying it to itself. Parsons still holds to the separation between the levels of theoretical statements and the object-domain. Within the object domain of the cultural interpretive system he grants the highest control level an idealistically interpreted status as "uncaused." Luhmann not only eliminates such extraterritorial remnants, but he also regards social-scientific systems theory as a means for the self-thematization of highly differentiated societies. The self-referred insertion of theory into the processes of that complexity-reduction which at the same time aims especially for the self-application of a concept of truth interpreted as a communications-medium (and so pragmatically relativized) brings with it problems that Luhmann can no longer meet with logical arguments; he must meet them decisionistically.[37]

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36. N. Luhmann, "Einführende Bemerkungen zu einer Theorie symbolisch generalisierter Kommunikationsmedien," in *Zeitschrift für Soziologie* 3 (1974), pp. 236-252.

37. N. Luhmann, "Systemtheoretische Argumentation," in J. Habermas and N. Luhmann, *Theorie der Gesellschaft* (Frankfurt, 1973), pp. 221ff.

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I will comment on points (a), (d), and (e) in the following section on an *ad hoc* basis. First I would like to return to the question of what can lead Luhmann to resume the theme of "history and evolution" after he has just interpreted the general systems-theory of society so radically that all bridges from evolutionary theory to history writing seem to have been cut.

III. Apparently, Luhmann opens surprising possibilities of cooperation between evolution theory and history writing by interpreting the achievements of the approach based on the theory of evolution very restrictively. First he rejects, in my opinion rightly, the idea of evolution as a causally unfolding law-like process; for nomological hypotheses which could be interpreted as natural laws of human behavior lead, if they are applied to complex historical material, to trivial explanations. Moreover, diachronic processual laws that claim validity for historical periods in general have not withstood close scrutiny. Instead, Luhmann introduces the concept of contingent causality, which of course does less to solve the causality-problem of theories of development than to seek a radical cure: for with this concept Luhmann renounces all claims to an explanation and limits the task of evolutionary theory to tracing the three above-mentioned evolutionary mechanisms (which increasingly vary independently of one another), in order to arrive at global statements about the change of system-dependent temporal structures, the acceleration of evolutionary tempo, etc. This evolutionary theory thus abandons the claim of giving the conditions for evolutionary leaps, or for the transition of social systems from one level of development to the other. Indeed it no longer even claims to identify various social formations from evolutionary points of view. Apart from the aforementioned statements of the tendency to designate the global effects of complexity intensification, the systems-theory of societal development still trusts itself only to study, for respectively given system conditions (and quantities of conditions), structurally conditioned contingency spans, within which "connection selections" for effect conditions are possible. Here Luhmann sees the point where the theory of evolution and history writing can intermesh. The historian should investigate how the pressure for a decision produced in structurally opened horizons of possibility is contingently reduced: he should describe narratively how and why a given situation changes into a resulting situation. On the other hand, the sociologist "with his insights on the evolutionary variation of structural contexts...shows the historian...that the constellation of realities and possibilities in certain historical situations cannot be explained from the situation itself, but only through general contexts."[38]

In this proposal for cooperation, Luhmann neglects the methodological difficulty resulting from the incompatibility of system- and action-theoretical basic concepts. As soon as the historian organizes his descriptions in the system-theoretical framework, the choice of the reference point, evolution (or

38. Luhmann, *Evolution und Geschichte*, p. 301.

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history as a whole), shatters the narrative reference system. Thus, the historian surrenders the role of narrator and exchanges it for that of an auxiliary scientist producing sociological data. That, too, is a meaningful division of labor, but no longer one between sociology and history writing. However, Luhmann has to be interested in the role of the history writer, for he hopes to obtain from history writing explanatory achievements of which the theory of evolution is supposed to be incapable. While the latter analyzes structural possibilities, history is supposed to explain how it is selectively used.

The question of how system- and action-paradigms can be conjoined in this disciplinary division of labor is of course dismissed as insubstantial; for the place which history is to occupy emerges only from Luhmann's attempt to make a virtue of a functionalism rendered into an independent universal science. For Luhmann must limit the explanatory claims of the theory of evolution to the elucidations of a research of possibilities for the very reason that the radicalization of systems-theory which he undertakes results in the impossibility of continuing to process genetic questions within this framework. What Luhmann presents as an advantage for a cooperation with history writing — namely, the concept of contingent causality — in truth betrays the weakness of a functionalistic method that sets itself as absolute: Luhmann would like the arbitrariness of equivalence-functionalistic statements to be restrained by historical factual research.

The methodological limits of social-scientific functionalism have long been known and sufficiently analyzed;[39] nor are they contested by Luhmann. I do not wish to repeat the enumeration of the reasons rooted in the structure of the object domain for why "the identification of goal-values or balanced states of social systems, as opposed to organic systems, presents fundamental methodolgocial difficulties."[40] It is important simply to state that because of these difficulties of identification in the social sciences, the choice of reference points for functionalistic analyses remains arbitrary. No criteria for theoretically justifying reference determinations can be drawn from a functionalistically designed system-theory of society. Thus functionalism must struggle with at least two weaknesses: it can neither explain the emergence of new structures, nor determine the *identity* of social systems in the variation of their changes of structure and condition. An observable change of systemic conditions or structure cannot be explained by allusion to the function it fulfills from an externally adduced point of reference. For, depending on the choice of the reference point, the same process can assume very different functions, while given a fixed reference point, other processes can fulfill the same function. Social-scientific functionalism serves to detect classes of functionally equivalent changes of condition or structural formations, but not

39. J. Habermas, *Logik der Sozialwissenschaften*, pp. 164ff.; R. Mayntz, Art., "Strukturell-Funktionale Theorie," in Bernsdorf-Bülow, eds., *Lexikon der Soziologie* (Stuttgart, 1969); P. Ridder, "Historischer Funktionalismus," in *Zeitschrift für Soziologie* I (1972), pp. 333-352; R. Döbert, *Systemtheorie und die Entwicklung religiöser Deutungssysteme, Zur Logik des sozial-wissenschaftlichen Funktionalismus*, Teil I (Frankfurt, 1973).

40. Döbert, pp. 66ff.

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to explain the genesis of newly emerging states and structures. Indeed, functionalism not only gives no explanatory value to these genetic questions, which should be of primary interest to an evolution theory — it cannot even fulfill the necessary prerequisites for dealing with genetic questions. It is not possible in this framework to identify the important constituent structures of a society that determine the range of variation that must not be exceeded if this society is to preserve its identity: "To be able to distinguish between relevant system changes and irrelevant surface variation, an analog is needed for the concept of death of organic systems. This function could be fulfilled by the descriptions of states of individual stages within an evolutionary stage model, wherein changes which would have to be attributed to evolutionary leaps would by definition have to be considered relevant."[41]

Döbert thus already mentions the most important requirement which any theory of evolution must meet: it must counterbalance and not replicate the weaknesses of systems-theory. Luhmann, on the contrary, inserts the theory of evolution into the categorical framework of systems-theory and makes a virtue of the functionalistic necessity to cooperate, by calling on history to limit the arbitrarinesses of a functionalistic method that has become independent. Such restrictions can probably not be adduced *ad hoc*, but can be introduced only on the theoretical level on which evolutionarily momentous structural change can be explained through evolutionary learning.

S.N. Eisenstadt, an old master of social-scientific functionalism, makes in this connection an interesting allusion to the "crucial problem for the whole reappraisal of revolutionary perspectives — namely the explanation of the variability of institutionalized solutions to the problems arising from the development of a given level of structural differentiation. Here it should be recognized that the emergence of a solution, i.e., the institutionalization of a social order congruent with the new range of problems, *is not necessarily given in the process of differentiation* and that the condition giving rise to structural differentiation and to 'structural sensitivity' to a greater range of problems *do not necessarily create the capacity to solve these problems* or determine the nature of such solutions."[42] Eisenstadt makes it clear that the emergence and perception of system problems by no means explains how a system acquires the ability also to solve these problems. He demands a clear distinction between (equivalent) quantities of solutions for an identifiable *system problem* that have to be studied functionalistically on the one hand, and on the other *learning processes* that can explain why a few systems expand their problem-solving capacities while others fail when faced with the same problems. Eisenstadt, like the representatives of modernization research in general, seeks the explanation in the emergence of elites who offer solution potentials and take innovative initiatives. He speaks of an interaction

41. *Ibid.*, p. 69.

42. S.N. Eisenstadt, "Social Change and Development," in *Readings in Social Evolution and Development* (Oxford, 1970), p. 16; cf. also an older work of the same author: "Social Change, Differentiation and Evolution," in *American Sociological Review* 29 (1964), pp. 375-386.

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"between processes of change on the one hand and 'mutative' elites on the other."[43] Eisenstadt chooses the term "mutation" because he ascribes to the elites the role of a mechanism that produces new solution variants.

Luhmann too introduces a variety-generating mechanism — however, it is an abstract quantity, language. Yet Luhmann does not regard this mechanism as the bearer of socio-cultural learning processes, with whose help we can give respectively specific explanations as to why a few systems, when faced with unsolvable steering problems form new structures and increase their complexity, while others do not. One could see a certain plausibility in the fact that Luhmann introduces an explanatory mechanism, and then immediately removes its explanatory power, if one keeps in mind the merely metaphorical nature of the borrowed terms, variation, selection and stabilization, and understands that the allusion to "negative potentials" of language could hardly suffice to comprehend the socio-cultural learning-mechanism corresponding to the thoroughly analyzed biochemical process of mutation. Instead, a genetic theory of language-mediated cognition is required (in areas of objectifying thought and of moral-practical insight), which explains evolutionary learning as a process of construction and reconstruction in the sense of Piaget, instead of subverting it functionalistically from the first.

On the other hand, the reference to elites who embody solution potentials is overly concrete to represent a serious alternative to Luhmann's unconvincing introduction of "mutating language." Elites and counter-elites are the bearers of innovative potentials only under certain socio-structural conditions. If we take the example of the transition from primitive to state-organized societies (archaic class societies) studied by Eder,[44] then it seems questionable whether elites emerged and transformed the forms of consciousness of a conventional morality already available in myth into new juridical institutions. Moreover, what a priori argument would there be against the possibility that such innovations are achieved by the masses in their struggle against dominant elites? But sociological considerations are not at all called for here, because they fall short of the level of abstraction on which the structural conditions of possibility of learning processes relevant to evolution must be given. Sociologically identifiable groups can *indicate* the existence of an innovative potential, but they cannot *explain* the formation of an innovative potential. Learning potentials must rather be secured tangibly by consciousness structures that can be understood as learning levels.

A hypothetical consideration should first clarify the concept of structures of consciousness arranged according to a degree of development. If this concept could be inserted into a theory of social evolution (no longer merely imprisoned in the system paradigm), then the methodological difficulties of social-scientific functionalism would be met. The identity of social systems could be determined from evolutionary perspectives, if within their cultural interpretation systems structures of consciousness were expressed that vary in

43. Eisenstadt, "Social Change," pp. 19f.
44. Eder, *Die Entstehung staatlich organisierter Gesellschaften.*

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evolution across a rationally reconstructable pattern of evolutionary stages. A demonstrated developmental logic for collectively shared structures of consciousness would make it possible to non-arbitrarily identify the essential constitutive structures of a society. Döbert developed this argument in his study on the development of systems of religion: "Only a theory of social evolution that precisely formulates the concept of the 'death' of social systems as a regression to an earlier evolutionary stage or as transition to a new phase can prevent the disjunction of social change-social stability from being completely blurred. For such a theory must implicitly define what changes can be considered relevant."[45] If we can thus theoretically justify the criteria for establishing reference points, we also have the possibility of combining the functionalistic analysis of changes of state and structure with the solution of genetic questions. That is especially likely when the collectively shared structures of consciousness are understood as learning levels, i.e., as structural conditions of possible learning processes. The evolutionary learning process consists then in the constructive mastery of new learning levels. Evolutionary learning processes are reflexive — they are learning applied to structural conditions of learning.

Developmental psychology, as is well known, offers a sufficiently analyzed ontogenetic model for such a concept. Piaget, his Geneva school, and American psychologists in this tradition (such as Bruner, Flavel, Furth, Kohlberg, etc.) have demonstrated a developmental logic of arranged learning levels in the child's cognitive development[46] and have preserved the constructivist concept of learning (that mediates between maturationist and milieu-theoretical conceptions). Meanwhile the development of moral consciousness can be analyzed in terms of a logical development as the core of a universal role-competence (these structures of consciousness are directly relevant for an ontogenetic investigation of action-theoretical basic concepts). The attempts to discover similar structures of consciousness on the level of the development of macro-systems, or the attempts to make the discoveries of cognitivistic developmental psychology at least heuristically fruitful for a developmentally oriented investigation of collectively shared structures of consciousness are just beginning. Such efforts, which have been made for the development of religion (Bellah, Döbert), and also for the development of law and morality (Eder, Habermas), are, however, encouraging. Points of departure also exist for a corresponding structural study of collective identities such as tribes, empires, nations, etc.[47]

45. Döbert, p. 69.

46. On the concept of developmental logic, cf. A. Pinard and M. Laurendeau, "Stage," in Piaget's "Cognitive Development Theory," in D. Elkind and H.J. Flavell, eds., *Studies in Cognitive Development* (London, 1969), pp. 121-170; J.H. Flavell and H.F. Wohlwill, *Formal and Functional Aspects of Cognitive Development* (London, 1969), pp. 67-120; J.H. Flavell, "An Analysis of Cognitive Developmental Sequences," in *General Psychological Monographs* 86 (1972), pp. 279-350.

47. Not only the moral-practical but also the structures of cognitive consciousness in the narrower sense are of significance for the evolutionary transition to higher societal formations — for instance, time structures that determine how a social system can relate to its respective own

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The above casts a different light on the problem of causality, which Luhmann has treated. I agree with him that it is not meaningful to understand social evolution as a causal process unfolding like a natural law. But the concept of "contingency causality" offers an alternative that imposes quite unnecessary renunciations of explanations. I propose to explain the evolutionary changes of social systems with simultaneous reference to developmental logics (structures of consciousness) and historical processes (events). Of course, developmental logic and history must not be separated abstractly as structure and event (in the structuralist reinterpretation of historical materialism). But a premature Hegelian combination uniting the logic of evolution and history as two moments of the same totality would be just as false. (For then one does not escape the danger of interpreting the process through which the totality is preserved, as a movement either of the constructive spirit or of the working subject, that is, within the boundaries of

past and future. Since Luhmann mentions this example I want to contrast a functionalistic and a developmental theory of evolution in terms of their research strategies concerning time structures.

In both cases the domain of phenomena is the same, namely the evolutionary changes in the forms of social consciousness, which can be deciphered from the structures of world view and of the specialized treatment of the past, i.e., history writing: the mythical ideas of time, in which the past and future horizons are not yet clearly differentiated (so that the two dimensions blend in "once upon a time"); the high cultural time-ideas, which coordinate the cosmic circularity and the cycle of the ages of life with a linear sequence of political events (whereby eschatology represents a particular form of coordination that with the idea of salvation history already contains the model for world history later conceived as a unity); finally the modern ideas of a historicized time which makes possible the concept of *one single* history as a tradition-produced continuity of accumulated interpretations of respective pasts. Luhmann in "Weltzeit und Systemgeschichte," in Ludz, pp. 81-115, now systematically penetrates through these basic concepts of social time and understands them as a particular reproduction form of selectivity. So the evolutionarily important differentiation of time horizons comes into view only as the result of increasing system complexity: more complex, i.e., broader, more abstract, internally more differentiated time horizons are more suitable for the preservation of more complex societies because they allow them to simultaneously maintain complex and simplified relations to the social environment (for remembering and forgetting are complementary achievements). However, this explains nothing — once social consciousness of time has been analyzed in basic functionalistic concepts, the emergence of time structures can also no longer be explained.

But it is different if our approach to the respectively prevailing time structures is not functionalist reductivism, but rational reconstruction. An example for the first step of a reconstruction of the time structure prevalent today, which can be read from modern history writing, would be Koselleck's studies on the singularization, temporalization, produceability, and acceleration of "history" since the 18th century, in R. Koselleck, "Historia Magistra Vitae," in M. Riedel, ed., *Natur und Geschichte* (Stuttgart, 1967), pp. 196-220. Danto takes a further step with his analysis of the time structures of the narrative, which could be elaborated perhaps even more strictly with means from time logic. A satisfactory structural description of modern time consciousness could be compared with similar structural descriptions for other temporal structures which can be documented in political history writing, in high religions and cosmological world interpretations, in archaic chronicles of rulers, in cosmogonies and in local mythical traditions. Let us assume that a variant of the developmental pattern resulted, which Piaget was able to prove for ontogenesis — whereby the terms of physical and of "experienced," i.e., also of social time, obviously change with the stages of general cognitive development. Cf. J. Piaget, *The Child's Conception of Time* (New York, 1970). Then the reconstructed developmental series of collectively shared temporal structures could contribute to explaining social-evolutionary learning processes. For not every explanation of changes of condition or structure means explanation with the help of nomological hypotheses interpreted as natural laws.

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the philosophy of the subject). It seems useful to me to start with the interdependence of two countervailing causalities. If we distinguish the plane of structural possibilities (learning-levels) from the plane of factual processes, then the two causalities can be clarified with a change of explanatory perspectives. The emergence of a new historical event can be explained by reference to contingent peripheral conditions and to the *challenge posed by structurally open possibilities.* On the other hand, the emergence of a new structure of consciousness can be explained with reference to the developmental logic of the pattern of previous structures and to an *impulse given by problem-generating events.* But what it means to be "challenged" by structurally open possibilities, or to be "nudged" by problem-generating events, can be better understood if, on the one hand, we understand the structures of consciousness (as suggested) as universal conditions of possible learning processes, and if on the other, we interpret events as occurrences that in light of limited capacities of solution appear as excess demands, i.e., problems. The connection of the two causalities with which we are trying to grasp the influence of structures on history (and thus cumulative processes) and vice versa the influence of history on structures (and thus the actualization of developmental patterns and the emergence of new structures), can probably be seriously analyzed only in the framework of a processual logic of generation and of problem solving.

IV. It is my thesis that a theory of social evolution that does not deny itself through unnecessary explanatory renunciations cannot be developed solely within the framework of social-scientific functionalism. A fruitful theory of evolution will have to combine the two rational models that we have treated under the rubrics of "system-environment" and "reconstruction." Then social evolution could be understood as a two-stage activity of problem solving by macro-systems.

On another occasion I suggested that social formations be designated by highly abstract rules, which we can call organizational principles. By this I mean those innovations that brought forth by developmental logic of reconstructed learning-stages and that determine a respectively new learning level of society. A learning level means structural conditions of the possibility of cognitive-technical and moral-practical learning processes. The principle of organization of a society circumscribes a range of variation. It determines especially within what structures changes of the institutional and interpretation system are possible; in what quantity existing productive power capacities can be socially used or the development of productive power itself can be stimulated; and thus also how far the steering achievement, i.e., the system-complexity of a society, can be increased. In explaining the transition from one social formation to the other we must explain the institutional core of the new organizational principle —e.g., a differentiated state system in the transition to archaic high cultures, and a differentiated economic system (with a complementary state) in the transition to the (at

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first capitalist) modern era. With such explanations (a) we go back to system-problems which constitute evolutionary challenges because they put excessive demands on the steering capacity of the old forms of society, and (b) we return to the evolutionary learning process that produces a new principle of organization. Social evolution occurs in two stages insofar as it takes place both in the learning and adaptation processes on the *respectively given* learning level (until its structural possibilities are exhausted), *and* in those improbable evolutionary leaps that lead to *new* learning levels. A society can learn in a constructivistic sense by accepting the evolutionary challenges before which the available steering capacity fails and by meeting them through the full use and *institutionalization* of the overflowing individual potentials (already collectively accessible in world views). Here the first step is the establishment of a new form of social integration (via family, forms of state organization, universalistic exchange and legal traffic with corresponding collective identities, such as tribe, empire, nation, etc.). Only this new form of social integration in which the new learning level that is to be explained according to a logic of development is expressed, makes possible a further increase of system complexity, for example, the social use of productive forces, the formation of new forms of society, new media, etc. Here functionalistic analysis has its place: it can explain why individual societies on a given level of development chose different developmental variants, why for example the same organizational principle (the family) has been stamped respectively in one of the different forms of matri- or patri- or bilineal relationship systems.

This approach, which is presented here only programmatically, proved fruitful in Eder's attempt to explain the origin of the state in the transition to archaic high cultures. Now I want to complement this reasoned study not, however, by an explanatory sketch regarding the origin and development of the modern era. Rather, I would like to use the remarks made by Luhmann on this subject as the occasion for suggestions that may once again elucidate the difference of the approaches. Luhmann names a few "structural conditions that in the transition from the 18th to the 19th century made possible the realization of the novel social type of 'civil society'." In a functionalistic perspective such structural conditions, of course, result from a process of differentiation. Through stronger functional specification the subsystems, state, religion, economy, family, and science, acquire greater autonomy. The independent partial systems pose new problems for one another. The selection criteria, developed in specific subsystems, such as *raison d'état*, privatized faith, profit orientation, passionate love, logico-empirical truth criteria, do not work in coordination and therefore also require new levels of integration. This problem cannot be mastered simply by a new historical consciousness, namely, through differentiation of time horizons and a devaluation of tradition-bound pasts in favor of anticipated future presents, for every subsystem casts its own projection of possibilities into the future. Innovations are reached which Luhmann, with Parsons, calls

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'inclusion': "Inclusion means that all function-contexts are made accessible for all participants of social life: each one has — this affects the differentiation of clerics and laymen — the direct possibility to make his own decision on faith. Every man is legally competent; what rights he has is determined exclusively by history as it unfolds in the legal system itself. Every man, within the functionally ineluctible limits (age), has access to political offices and political election. Each is free to acquire and dispose of property. Each may in principle know everything, and the criteria for truth-falsehood are geared to intersubjective verification. Each must go to school, and here too there are developing, though only very recently, corresponding tendencies to dissolve concepts that limit the universalization of pedagogical responsibility."[48]

Luhmann recalls the familiar fact that during the modern era, universalistic principles are to an ever greater extent regulating affairs in the relevant partial systems. The concrete morality of tradition-dependent behavior orientations is being replaced by increasingly abstract and universal norms that are posited and are both subject to critique and in need of justification from perspectives of principle, i.e., norms that require equality, individuation, independence (rational decisions and internalized controls). Luhmann is, indeed, not interested in the *internal structure* of these regulations, but only in the integration *functions* fulfilled by the universalistic orders; the aforementioned differentiations of the partial systems does demand sufficiently numerous and frequent interactions. Of course, this is only one line of Luhmann's argumentation but a typical one, insofar as this functional analysis once again explains nothing. It does not explain why in modern societies such processes of differentiation take place at all; and, assuming that they do take place, still less does functional analysis explain why modern societies can also satisfy the growing demand for integration, and why they satisfy it by incorporation of universalistic principles. The institutionalization of certain rationality structures is, indeed, as universal historical comparison shows, quite an improbable solution that succeeded endogenously only once (unless Japan can be construed as a second case). That is why Marx and Weber were first interested in the explanation for this innovation, i.e., in the *emergence* of the modern era and not so much in modernization, in the *implementation* of modernity since the 18th century. If one functionalistically begins the description with processes of differentiation, then Eisenstadt can rightly demand a non-trivial explanation of the innovation potentials that make possible a solution to the ensuing integration problems.

With Norman Birnbaum, I consider it meaningful to treat Marx's and Weber's explanatory proposals as complementary and not as competing approaches.[49] Crudely simplified, one can say that Marx, in the

48. Luhmann, *Evolution und Geschichte*, p. 303.

49. N. Birnbaum, "Conflicting Interpretations of the Rise of Capitalism: Marx and Weber," *British Journal of Sociology* Vol. IV, June 1953, pp. 125-141.

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wage-labor-capital relation, has discovered the *new principle of organization.* The institution of the wage-labor contract, making possible a social class of free producers, liberated from the bonds of tradition and from the professional guild and feudal organizations of labor, becomes the core of a system of civil law, which of course first developed fully only in the 18th century. This embodies universalistic principles and regulates the dealings of the subjects of civil law according to general norms which demarcate areas of strategic action — areas for the individual private persons to pursue their interests free of concrete ethical life. The establishment of a labor market means that universalistic principles penetrate into social work. Wage labor is organized in the capitalist enterprise. The enterprise can, as an enterprise separated from the household and based on rational bookkeeping, work with a profit-orientation as soon as work has become abstract or a cost-factor in the calculation of success. The form of abstract labor makes possible the differentiation of the economic system from the political order that is constitutive for modern societies — and vice versa the reorganization of the state under the functional imperatives of economic activity (i.e., the emergence of the modern state with the bureaucracy prototypically described by Weber on the model of Prussia).[50]

50. The modern state, in contrast with the state in traditional societies, especially the great empires, is usually characterized by territoriality, monopolization of legitimate force and central, highly organized administration. At least as important and more revealing from genetic viewpoints are two further traits: sovereignty toward the outside (that means the recognition of the autonomy of the state in a system of states, whose equal relation among themselves is based on the *ultima ratio* of the use of military power); on the other hand, functional specification of the use of legal force internally (this means a differentiation and autonomization toward all other subsystems, especially the separation of the political and the economic system). Moreover, this relation has also been analyzed well by Marx. Cf. L. Basso, "Gesellschaft und Staat in der Marxschen Theorie," in Basso, *Gesellschaftsformation und Staatsform* (Frankfurt, 1974), pp. 22f.: "In reality, however, the autonomy of political force is always conditioned by societal structures which it cannot overcome, and only a change of the structures can lead to a radical change of the power relations. Under this aspect, it is true that political power in precapitalist society has more independence than in capitalist society, since the functional mechanism of society is less complex and the contexts are simpler, if not rudimentary (village agrarian economy), so that the central power has a considerable freedom of action.... It is important to keep the two problems apart: the independence of the political factor from the various fractions of the ruling classes and the independence of the system as a whole. As far as the first aspect is concerned, the independence or rather the differentiation of the political factor first develops with capitalist society, which assigns the administration of political power to a specifically trained stratum, while in precapitalist societies political power and economic power were united in one and the same person and the problem of mutual independence thus did not arise. But if one regards the second aspect, i.e., independence toward the functional mechanism of the system, it will be all the less, the more complex are the social structures in which the state is incorporated as an essential element, but from whose functions it, for its part, is independent. It is evident that there are only slight or no possibilities at all to resist the logic of the system which the state must serve." C. Offe gives a similar formulation to the relation of state and economy in advanced capitalism (*Berufsbildungsreform*, Frankfurt, 1975, pp. 23ff.).

The connection of the emergence of the modern system of states with the development of a capitalist economic system, stressed among others by F. Braudel in *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II* (New York, 1972), is, however, somewhat relativized by other authors. For example, C. Tilly, "Reflections on the History of European Sate-Making," in *op.cit.*, note 23, pp. 71f.

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Weber's interest is directed on the one hand at the structural analogies in the various life spheres of capitalist economic activity, modern admnistration, a standing army, abstract law, the Protestant ethic, bourgeois democracy, empirical and at the same time mathematized science, contrapuntal music, perspectivistic painting, etc. Tracing this all-encompassing process of rationalization, Weber gains insights into *structures of consciousness* that have become relevant for the emergence of modern forms of society in two ways: namely (a) as structures of world views which have, through certain traditional orientations, especially religious interpretations, been transformed into universalistic value-orientations and dispositions of conduct and so have determined the motivational foundation of a rational conduct of life. This applies, among other things (according to Weber's thesis) to the significance of Protestant socialization for the early capitalist economic ethics of entrepreneurs; (b) as structures which were selectively available in world views already before the transition to the modern era, which were in a sense already there but determined the new learning level of society only with the breakthrough to modern times. This applies to the institutional embodiment of the universalistic principles in the various areas of life: first in the system of social work, with the emergence of markets for the commodity labor power; in the system of civil law and in public administration oriented to civil law (with the implementation of "legal domination"); in the area of socialization where, with the privatization of attitudes of faith and the emergence of the bourgeois family, universalistic and at the same time individualistic principles of ethics and of achievement-orientation gained influence; in the scientific system which had to maintain the framework for theoretical discourse, i.e., for unlimited and public argumentation; in the field of the political will formation (with the extension of formal democratic participatory rights) as well as even in peripheral areas of distribution (with the expansion of social-state compensations).

This enumeration is not supposed to suggest a rectilinear process of implementing uniform rationality structures in different subsystems of society, but rather to hint that with the capitalist principle of organization a learning level has been reached whose structural possibilities, no matter how selective, have been utilized through formally similar learning processes.[51] Because Weber did not himself distinguish the particular socio-psychological significance of the universalistic structures of consciousness for the mediation of structures of personality and society clearly enough from their *general* evolutionary significance for social structures, his ideas, on the basis of a too narrowly conceived concept of causality, have generally been understood as idealistically motivated objections against Marx. That was all the more possible, since Weber as a sociologist did investigate the various institutional

51. Nor should a development in the rationality structures suggest the impression of linear progress in the real life contexts. New learning levels mean not only widened ranges of options, but also a structural shortage of respectively new resources and that means new categories of burdens. Horkheimer and Adorno's *Dialektik der Aufklarung* deals with this.

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embodiments of the modern consciousness structures, but did not logically analyze these structures themselves.

The structural descriptions of formal-operational thinking and of a moral consciousness guided by principles, which cognitive developmental psychology provides, today offer a better access to these collectively shared structures of consciousness. On the one hand, this is a matter of the significance of a universalistic morality (a) for processes of socialization; (b) for personal relations in private areas of communicative action (morality); (c) for the institutions of jurisprudence; (d) for the justification of the compulsion of positive and formal law; and thus (e) for the delimitation of a universalistic area of strategic action ("civil society"). On the other hand, it is a matter of institutionalization (f) of procedures of objectifying thinking and calculation (e.g., in enterprises and public administrations); (g) of the application of technical and organizational knowledge (e.g., in the field of production or in the military); (h) of certain methods of acquiring knowledge (in the empirical sciences); and finally (i) of goal-rational attitudes to problems in general (cf. for instance, the privileged position of juristically schooled legal specialists in government). Structural descriptions are, moreover, necessary for the symbolic structures of self- and group-identities, which thus correspond to rationalized circumstances of life.

B. Nelson, in various works, dealt expressly with the subject of these modern structures of consciousness.[52] Nelson concentrates, on the one hand, on the theological, philosophical and juristic discourses of the European 12th and 13th centuries to demonstrate by basic terms such as *universitas, civitas, communitas, persona, libertas, conscientia, liber, machina,* etc., the basic traits of a universally oriented thinking based only on arguments. On the other hand, Nelson studies the dual revolution of the 16th and 17th centuries — the Reformation (Luther, Calvin) and modern science (Galileo, Descartes), in order to demonstrate common features of these specifically modern achievements. Both sides, for example, defend themselves against casuistic and probabilistic interpretations and base an absolute certainty of faith or knowledge on the subjectivity of the individual: "All — Luther, Calvin, Galileo, Descartes, Pascal — attacked the late medieval casuistry of conscience and probabilism of opinion at their very roots. Moreover, their attacks against every shade and grade of conjecturalism, fictionalism, and probabilism were put forward in the name of subjective certitude and objective certainty.... It hardly matters that Luther thought ill of the Copernican hypothesis or that Pascal was a devout Catholic and not a Calvinist. Under the first heading one might need to deal with the views of

52. B. Nelson, *The Idea of Usury* (Chicago, 1949); "Probabilists, Anti-Probabilists and the Quest for Certitude in the 16th and 17th Centuries," in *Actes du Xme Congres International d'Histoire des Science* (Paris, 1965), Vol. I, pp. 267-273; "Scholastic Rationales of Conscience," in *Journal of Sociological Studies in Religion* 7 (1968), pp. 157-177; "The Early Modern Revolution in Science and Philosophy," in *Boston Studies* 3 (Dordrecht, 1968), pp. 1-40; "Civilizational Complexes and Intercivilizational Encounters," *Sociological Analysis* 34 (1973), pp. 79-105; "Sciences and Civilizations, East and West: J. Needham and Max Weber," in *Boston Studies* 11(Dordrecht, 1974), pp. 445-488.

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Luther and Calvin on conscience, the old law, usury, conflicts in Great Britain over the common law, equity, the liberty of prophecy, inner light, social compact, the Court Christian. Under the second heading, we might consider two celebrated controversies in which the rationale-systems were in the balance: Galileo's encounters with the Inquisition, and Pascal's Provincial Letters (1656) and the bitter controversies over the system of moral probabilism and the direction of the cure of souls in Italy, Spain, Portugal and elsewhere."[53] I find it above all interesting that by the 16th or 17th century a clear separation is made between theoretical and practical reason, between a logic of facts and a logic of decisions: "During the entire period under discussion it will be recalled that the logics were interdependent, in fact they were woven together in a single fabric of propositions centering around the notion of conscience. As the continuing usage of a number of modern European languages should serve to recall, the Latin *conscientia* had imbedded within it a dual reference: the moral conscience of the 'proximate rule of right reason in the moral sphere,' and scientific knowledge. It is, therefore, no wonder that all important cultural and social innovations in our period had to involve attack upon, or reconstruction of, the logics of decision in the spheres of action and thought, in the scientific and moral domain alike."[54] The differentiation of meaning between conscience and science shows in an exemplary fashion that the rational life-conduct of the modern era no longer is based on a world view thoroughly structured in a discursive manner, uniting faith and knowledge ontotheologically. Faith and knowledge separate in the same way as, within profane knowledge, moral-practical insight and objectifying thought.

However, Nelson believes that these modern structures of consciousness, *which are products of the modern age*, can be explained with the help of those structures of rationality which in the 12th and 13th centuries served as midwife for the birth of modernity. Nelson considers these universalistic world-view structures of the European high Middle Ages to be exclusively a Western phenomenon. That misleads him to burden these structures of rationality with the role of an idealistic explanation of the modern era, which supposedly emerged "out of the Western spirit." A more complex and, I believe, more appropriate explanation results from the point of departure that the universalistic potential was not at all a peculiarity of occidental traditions but can be documented for all the world-views originating between 800 and 300 B.C. in China, India, Greece and Israel. These doctrines overcome mythical thinking to the extent that they objectify the world as a whole, distinguish the natural order from the historical one, develop the concept of an abstract law, trace the multiplicity of phenomena to principles, and replace narrative explanations by argumentative ones. At the same time the individual subject learns to reflect on his position and his own constructive

53. B. Nelson, "Conscience and the Making of Early Modern Cultures: The Protestant Ethic Beyond Max Weber," *Social Research* 36 (1969), pp. 4-21. Here p. 12.
54. *Ibid.*, p. 11.

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achievements; therefore individualized concepts of the self and the soul also appear.[55] Now these rationalized world views, which go back to Chinese, Indian, and Greek philosophers, to the prophets and to Buddha, all express universalistic consciousness structures. Only for that reason do they imply an evolutionary turning point from the archaic to the developed, high cultures which unfolded as empires. K. Jaspers speaks of the "axis time," because at that time structural possibilities opened up, "from which mankind has been living until today. Since then the truth is: remembering and reawakening the axis time — renaissances bring a spiritual upturn."[56]

But if we accept that the universalistic potential of Western tradition is by no means unique and therefore also cannot explain why structures of consciousness potentially available in several places were used and incorporated institutionally only in one place for the mastery of evolutionary challenges, then we must attempt to so combine the theoretical approaches of Marx and Weber to come up with a guide toward making an explanatory sketch. I lack the empirical knowledge to do this. The following remarks are only supposed to illustrate how such a guide would look.

(a) *Evolutionary challenges.* We must be able to list systematic problems of the feudalism of the high Middle Ages, which overburden the capacity of this society (a political class society) to adapt and to learn. Marx, quite correctly, cited economic problems that could not be solved on the basis of a feudal agrarian production with urban handicrafts. In this context, the disintegrating role of merchant capital would have to be studied, and, among other things, Dobb's argument that distant trade and the money economy have, via increased luxury consumption and more intense exploitation, led to destabilizations with deep consequences for the total economy.[57]

(b) *The new principle of organization.* The problems which lead to the breakdown of the feudal system can be solved by differentiating out of the political area a system of market-economy geared to wage labor (and by creating a complementary relation between economy on the one hand, and a system of civil law, government with taxing power and a modern administration, on the other). The institutional core of the new form of social integration is the internal delimitation of a universalistically organized area of strategic activity (the reorganization of labor relations in the capitalist enterprise).

(c) *Particular innovation potentials.* Since the 13th century experimentation with capitalist forms of production (the publishing industry) was going on in European society in various places (Pirenne, Dobb). Only here did the universalistic structures present in all developed high cultures emerge out of their world-view latency, only here did the innovation potentials of craftsmen

55. K. Eder, "Die Entstehung rationalisierter Weltbilder," in *Verhandlungen des 10. Deutschen Soziologentages.*

56. K. Jaspers, *The Origin and Goal of History,* (New Haven, Conn., 1953).

57. M. Dobb, *Studies in the Development of Capitalism* (New York, 1957); on the emergence of a "European World Economy" since the middle of the 13th century, cf. I. Wallerstein, *The Modern World System* (New York, 1974), Vol. I.

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and in part also of mercantile elites so consolidate that universalistic principles were abstracted from the world-views and *institutionalized* in the area of social labor. An explanation of the phenomenon will probably have to refer primarily to the particular circumstance of a separation of secular powers from the clerical ones[58] and the separate development of the occidental cities (with the emergence of a bourgeois class).[59]

(d) *Conditions of stabilization.* Until the second half of the 16th century, there was, so to speak, only experimentation with the new mode of production, only since the end of the Tudor period does capitalism become predominant. Stabilizing conditions of the early capitalist social environment are, among others, the emergence of a system of territorial states,[60] an international division of labor within the European world economy (Wallerstein) and "original accumulation" in the dominant states, the emergence of an industrial "reserve army"; probably also the socializing influence of favorable cultural traditions in the strata from which the entrepreneurs were recruited (perhaps a strongly modified version of Weber's Protestantism-capitalism thesis retains its significance).[61]

(e) Among the *structure-forming effects* of the new mode of production are especially (a) the conflict between social inequality geared to the mode of production and universalistic equality-postulates anchored in the political system that reaches consciousness as class conflict; (b) a permanent, though repeatedly interrupted by crises, increase of the productive forces, which finally initiates the mechanization of production in the 18th century; and (c) the institutionalization and later use of the modern science which is characterized by a methodical objectivation of nature and which could come about only by the improbable combination of trained discursive reason and mathematics, of the experimental relationship with nature and an instrumental attitude to objects, learned by practice in the crafts.

If an outline of this kind could be developed, it would explain the fulfillment of the most important preconditions under which what is today called modernization was able to begin, with the national variants that developed.

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58. S.N. Eisenstadt, "The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism," in *The Protestant Ethic and Modernization* (New York, 1970).

59. O. Brunner, "Stadt und Bürgertum in der Europäischen Geschichte," in *Neue Wege der Sozialgeschichte* (Göttingen, 1956), pp. 97-115; cf. also P.E. Schramm, *Hamburg, Deutschland und die Welt* (Munich, 1943).

60. S. Rokkan, in "Dimensions of State Formation and Nation Building,"in Tilly, *op.cit.*, pp. 562-600, stresses, rather, the retarding effect of the early capitalist belt of cities stretching from the Baltic via Flanders and Southern Germany to Nothern Italy, in the process of formation of territorial states. As important as the trading centers and their immediate vicinity were for the *emergence*, so important apparently for the *implementation* of the capitalist mode of production were the lowlands, where agricultural production was first converted to wage-labor.

61. Weber's position is represented in a quite orthodox manner by B. Nelson's "Weber's Protestant Ethic," in Gloock and Hammond, eds., *Beyond the Classics* (New York, 1973), pp. 71-130. A contrary opinion is in H. Lüthy, "Variationen über ein Thema von Max Weber," in Seyfarth and Sprondel, pp. 99-122.

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V. Now let us assume that a theory of social evolution oriented to the logic of development, whose point of departure I have suggested, would withstand scrutiny: how would this theory relate to historical research and history writing? The relation to historical research is unproblematic. This has, insofar as it is pursued for the typological comparison of general structures and processual patterns, an irreplaceable heuristic function for the *formation* of evolutionary theorems. For the verification of these theorems, historical research has the equally irreplaceable technical function of obtaining and evaluating data. But, these functions of historical *research* for a theory of social evolution are not matched by any tasks which evolutionary theory could, in return, perform for history *writing*. For, evolutionary theoretical explanations, let us say of the transition to archaic high cultures (the origin of the state) or the transition to the modern era (the differentiating-out of a market society and the complementary emergence of the modern tax-empowered state), not only *need* no further narrative reshaping, they *cannot* even be brought into narrative form. In the framework of developmental theory, these transitions must be conceived as abstract transitions to new learning levels (which can perhaps be visualized as stages of development in the educational process of the human race); but they cannot, without endangering the categorical framework and thus also the explanatory power of the theory, be translated back into the achievements of actors and reinterpreted into a history that is borne by actors. I have tried to prove this methodologically in section III. From somewhat different points of view, I would like to take up this question again and try (1) to explain history writing as a form of application of theoretical knowledge; (2) to show the impermissibility of a narrative application of evolutionary theory; and (3) instead to delineate the context for the practical application of evolutionary theories.

1. History writing is bound to the narrative reference system. With this reference system we do not demarcate any objective scientific field; we find it pre-existent before all science as a cognitive form in which we remember and repeat, i.e., make reproduceable, everyday experiences. Certainly, history writing can be considered a stylized high form of the everyday narrative that is interwoven in interaction complexes; however, its link with the narrative reference system merely strengthens a reflexivity intrinsic to the real life world (*Lebenswelt*). The historian as a history writer does not transcend the practice of life in the hypothetical stance which he assumes as critical historical researcher. History writing today uses the theoretical knowledge and methods of research which the social sciences present and which history as a science has developed so that we can visualize a continuum between naive narratives and discursively enriched historical descriptions; but *as* narrative description it is always affirmative. It does not say how it could have been, but how it actually was. History is no less action-related and, in this sense, "dogmatic" than any other category of applied knowledge — e.g., technologies.

On the level of methodological reflections, it can easily be shown that the

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choice of reference events, of interpretation framework, of rational models, etc., is, in a certain sense, conventional and in any case dependent on the hermeneutic situation of the narrator's point of departure. But as soon as the historian begins with the description, he assumes a consensus about the decisions to narrate, in the light of the chosen interpretation framework, how the history "really" or "in fact" happened. That he assumes this consensus is not so unnatural; for the more a historian agrees with the respectively applicable tradition, the more directly he can produce action-oriented knowledge by articulating, continuing, expanding, and making more precise a consciousness of history that is a source of identity. Even critically oriented history, which aims not at the preservation of traditions but their dissolution, establishes, as for example, Wehler's history of the German Reich, a *different* tradition — a history of impeded liberalization, of repressed social struggles, of unaccomplished emancipation, a Benjaminian history from the perspective of the defeated, for which in turn a consensus concerning the point of departure must be assumed, this time perhaps the consensus of those who felt liberated from the Nazis after 1945. The flow of the narrative would be interrupted by argumentations; for history writing does not comprise theoretical knowledge, it is a form of application of theoretical knowledge.

On the other hand, the very name of a theory of social evolution signalizes the claims that in the discursive stance general hypotheses are set up and tested concerning a domain which is constituted only with the help of basic concepts of systems theory and of the logic of development. What happens when theorems of this origin are applied narratively within the framework of a universal history?

2. When theorems of evolutionary theory are channeled into history writing by way of sociologization, when indeed evolutionary theory itself is built up into a glorified history, this results in theoretical narrative mixed forms with problematic status. For it leads to a burdening of evolutionary theory with preconditions and concepts that are meaningful only in narrative descriptions. As soon as basic assumptions of evolutionary theory are projected to the plane of a narrative of the history of mankind, the formal preconditions of unity, continuity and the limitation of the narrated history acquire a substantial and therefore a misleading meaning. For it seems as if the *totality* of history is the object of the evolutionary theory that has been slipped into the narrative and as if evolution is taking place in a generic subject, the bearer of a *continuously* unfolding *generic history*. But since as acting subjects we find ourselves always in a provincial situation as regards the future (since history is not yet "finished"), a theory of *development* claiming to be a theory of *history* makes us the unfulfillable offer of prediciting historical processes (and accepting the role of "prophesy").

U. Anacker and H.M. Baumgartner rightly insist that the idea of a history as a whole underlying the construction of histories must not be hypostasized: "History is only possible as a retrospective construction of narratives about events of the past which are, in a way, arbitrary. The resulting thesis that

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neither the ultimate history of the past nor *history* itself as a determinable interconection of past, present and future is an idea free of contradiction now seems to lead to the conclusion that it is no longer meaningful to speak of *history as such*.... But if one asks to what extent narratives can be action oriented, i.e., geared to human action, then from a transcendental viewpoint the context of narrative and interest must be thematized in such a way that not only the individual stories do not succumb to mere arbitrariness, but at the same time the *possible* connection of all narratives with one another is preserved. The interest in narrating, however, conceals the interest in totality in the sense of the whole of temporal reality, which though not realizable is nonetheless necessarily presupposed and for whose very sake narrative structures are intended.... The 'subject' of history is precisely in this sense a regulative idea like history itself: both have the positional validity of a principle of organization for constructions, a principle stemming from the practical interest in construction, i.e., in knowledge and action. But history is, therefore, necessary as a regulative principle."[62] Since the concept of history is subject to these transcendental restrictions, it must not be confused with the concept of evolution.

Evolutionary theory deals neither with the whole of history nor with individual historical events insofar as these are visualized as historical, i.e., narratable series of events. Rather, the historical material falls under the determinations of social evolution. This is not a macro-process happening to a generic subject. Bearers of evolution are society itself and also the subjects of action integrated in it. Evolution can be deciphered from a rationally reconstructable pattern of a hierarchy of ever more comprehensive structures. If we separate these structures from the events with which the empirical substrata change, we need assume neither univocity, nor *continuity*, nor *necessity*, nor *irreversibility* of the course of history. We can expect anthropologically deep-lying general structures which developed in the hominization-phase and determine the starting condition of social evolution: structures which probably emerged, as the cognitive and motivational potential of the humanoid great apes was being transformed and reorganized under conditions of linguistic communication. Such basic structures describe the logical terrain in which more comprehensive structural formations can occur. But *whether* or *when* the new structural formations develop depends on *contingent* circumstances.

Limitations in the use of the concept of evolution result already from the sense in which we use the concept 'developmental logic.' Developmental sequences can be reconstructed only for a competence that is objectively accessible for us on the respective contemporary level of development of our society. Marx, in a similar methodological context, reflects that labor first became recognizable as a universal determination of social systems to the

62. Article "Geschichte" in *Handbuch philosophischer Grundbegriffe* (Munich, 1973), vol. 2, pp. 555f. Cf. also H.M. Baumgartner, "Narrative Struktur und Objektivität, Wahrheitskriterien im historischen Wissen," in J. Rüsen, ed., *Historische Objektivität* (Göttingen, 1975).

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extent that with capitalist development, labor was established in the form of abstract labor and determined the socialization process as a whole. We cannot a priori reject the idea that in the future other structures than the cognitive-instrumental and moral-practical consciousness-structures familiar today will become accessible to a reconstruction, structures which we first master only intuitively. This circumstance limits the claim of validity of evolutionary theory to statements concerning retrospectively recognizable social-evolutionary learning processes. Indeed, these processes can be identified as evolutionarily consequential only in the light of innovation potentials that we can reconstruct *today* in terms of a logic of development.

Furthermore, an analysis of developmental logics can escape naturalistic misconclusions only when it does not inductively collect the hierarchically arranged structural patterns, but systematically justifies that the respectively higher learning level is superior to the previous one. This systematic gradation of problem solving capacities is possible when the achievements, as in the dimensions of objectivating knowledge and morally practical insight, are measured by universal claims to validity (here: by propositional truth and normative rightness).[63]

3. A narratively applied theory of evolution would, to summarize the above considerations, shatter the narrative reference system of history writing and lead to a "theorization of history." But "history" is a cognitive form, in which theoretical knowledge is not organized, but merely applied. Historical descriptions are action-oriented knowledge; they are on the same plane as the historical consciousness of contemporaries. As between the participant in discourse and one who takes action,[64] there is no difference of level between the history writer and his public.

But if that is so, then two questions remain open: (a) Does evolutionary theory, despite the importance of historical research for it, itself have absolutely no significance for history as history writing? (b) If the theory of social evolution cannot structure the writing of universal history, where then does it find application?

In regard to (a), it is not clear to me whether an evolutionary theory in the sense of a metatheory cannot perhaps be drawn upon to evaluate competing histories of the same phenomenal field. Perhaps critical viewpoints on the justification of problem guidelines and narrative perspectives can be derived from it. In this mediated fashion, an evolutionary theory would, after all, be able to "inspire" history writing.[65] That would mean that the historian's hermeneutic point of departure would no longer be determined by more or

63. Cf. J. Habermas, "What Is Universal Pragmatics?" in *Communication and the Evolution of Society* (Boston, 1979), pp. 1-68.

64. On the distinction between action and discourse, cf. J. Habermas, "Wahrheitstheorien," in *Wirklichkeit und Reflexion,* (Pfullingen, 1973).

65. This question is part of the problem area of a science of history for whose renewal J. Rüsen was striving: J. Rüsen, *Begriffene Geschichte* (Paderborn, 1969); Rüsen and Droysen, in H.-U. Wehler, ed., *Deutsche Historiker* (Göttingen, 1971), vol. 2, pp. 7-24; and Droysen, "Zur Logik der historischen Erkenntnis," in *Philosophische Rundschau* 20-21 (1974), pp. 269-286; pp. 24-55.

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less naturally given traditions, by the respectively prevalent identity-guaranteeing interpretation systems, but by a discursive further development of tradition.

In regard to (b), theories of evolution and the explanations of epoch-making developmental leaps based on them can enter those "discourses" in which competing identity-projections are "subject to debate."[66] The ideology critical function initiating enlightenment processes which reflexively applied evolutionary theories can adopt must be seen in this context.[67]

Moreover, evolution-theoretical statements on contemporary social formations have a direct practical relation insofar as they serve for the diagnosis of developmental problems. Thus the necessary restriction to retrospective explanations of the historical material is abandoned in favor of a *retrospective that is predesigned from action perspectives*: the diagnostician of our time takes the fictional standpoint of the evolution-theoretical explanation of a past lying in the future. That is typical for time-diagnostic theories of the present, such as, for example, Freyer's *Theory of the Present Age*, Marcuse's *One-Dimensional Man*, Bell's *Theory of Post-Industrial Society*, or Dahrendorf's Reith lectures on "The New Freedom." Marxist analyses of advanced capitalism, as a rule, also share this asymmetrical place of the theorist who analyzes developmental problems of present social systems with an eye to the structural possibilities which are not yet institutionalized — and perhaps never will find an institutional embodiment.

From this it can be seen that the time-diagnostic application of evolutionary theories is meaningful only in the framework of discursive will formation, that is, in a practical argumentation in which the issue is to give reasons why in a determined situation certain strategies and norms of action rather than others will be chosen by certain actors.

66. On this concept cf. Habermas, "Können komplexe Gesellschaften eine vernünftige Identität ausbilden?" in Habermas and Henrich, *Zwei Reden* (Frankfurt, 1974), pp. 65ff.

67. See the introduction to the new edition of Habermas, *Theory and Practice* (Boston, 1973).

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COMMUNICATION AND RECONCILIATION HABERMAS' CRITIQUE OF ADORNO*

by Axel Honneth

At the time of Adorno's death, Habermas pointed out a methodological bareness in Adorno's work. According to him, Adorno's theoretical veil no longer clothed the methodological skeleton. If one separates content from imagery, Habermas' comment signals a theoretical turn in critical theory from Adorno to Habermas. This is clear in their totally divergent forms of presentation, and especially regarding controversial relations to the tradition. This turn, which is equivalent to a change of paradigm within critical theory, has not hitherto been fully analyzed.[2] It remains unclear which theoretical paths critical theory took as it moved from its early analysis of fascism to Habermas' social theory. Moreover, Habermas himself has not outlined his own criticism of critical theory in order to clarify his relation to the Frankfurt tradition. A survey of scattered essays dealing with the classical beginnings of critical theory by Adorno, Benjamin and Marcuse[3] do not seem to provide a consistent account. These essays do not outline any major criticisms, nor do they seek to explicate different versions of the Frankfurt tradition.

Hence, Habermas' critical theory has only surreptitiously departed from the Frankfurt School's central motifs, and developed a unique perspective dealing with an alternative sociological and linguistic theory. In Habermas' version, critical theory no longer operates entirely within the parameters of Hegelianism and anti-systematic Hegelian dialectics. It also incorporates recent findings in linguistics. Within this reorientation — a change representing a mere reconceptualization — Adorno's philosophy plays a central role: Habermas discovers in Adorno's conception of critical theory a form or argument that, given the historical experience of fascism and

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*Translated from the German by Vincent Thomas and David Parent.

1. C. Grossner, *Verfall der Philosophie* (Hamburg, 1971), p. 15.

2. Among the works dealing with the theoretical turn begun by Habermas in the history and tradition of critical theory, see Albrecht Wellmer, *Critical Theory of Society* (New York, 1971); Albrecht Wellmer, "Communication and Emancipation: Reflections on the Linguistic Turn in Critical Theory," in John O'Neill, ed., *On Critical Theory* (New York, 1976), pp. 231-263; Trent Schroyer, *The Critique of Domination* (New York, 1973); M. Theunissen, *Gesellschaft und Geschichte. Zur Kritik der kritischen Theorie* (Berlin, 1969). New works in critical theory more strongly related to the beginnings of the Frankfurt School (e.g., by Schmidt and Reichelt) no longer see Habermas as belonging to the same tradition.

3. Cf. Jürgen Habermas, "Urgeschichte der Subjektivität und versilderte Selbstbehauptung," in *Philosophisch-politische Profile* (Frankfurt am Main, 1971); "Ein philosophierender Intellektueller," *ibid.*, pp. 176ff; "Herbert Marcuse, Einleitung zu einer Antifestschrift," *ibid.*, pp. 168ff.; "Technology and Science as Ideology," in *Toward a Rational Society* (Boston, 1970), pp. 81ff.; *Bewusstmachende oder rettende Kritik — Die Aktualität Walter Benjamins in Kultur und Kritik* (Frankfurt, 1973), pp. 302ff.

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Stalinism, critically retracts certain important theoretical demands made by the Frankfurt School tradition.[4] Adorno entrusts critical theory with neither the practice of a revolutionary social movement nor the advocate's role of representing a historically generated and suppressed rationality. Thus, Habermas implicitly takes the first steps toward a reorientation of social criticism to re-establish critical theory's tenuous claims within the present historical context. The key issue in Habermas' dispute with "critical theory" is how it can go beyond a defensive posture without theoretically reinstating its earlier central reliance on a proletarian mass movement.[5] The answer to this question can be adduced from his implicit critique of Adorno's philosophy.

For Adorno, fascism is the culmination of a universal process of reification. If critical theory insists on claiming historical reflectivity then it becomes a theory which takes its departure from the standpoint of "the fascist present in which the hidden side of things is revealed."[6] Even in the post-fascist period of reconstruction, Adorno reiterates the validity of a historical approach that views the logic of historical development as a process of increasing reification. Indeed, all of Adorno's disparate arguments are embedded in a historical and philosophical theory that views the experience of fascism as a "retrogressive anthropogenesis."[7] This view of history provides a critique of the two main versions of historical materialism, i.e., orthodox Marxism and Hegelian Marxism. Against an orthodox Marxism patterned after evolutionary theories in which history unfolds along with the growth in the productive forces, Adorno poses its counter-thesis: cumulative progress in the rational mastery of nature simultaneously propagates a form of reification in which domination becomes the organizing principle of both internal and external nature. Moreover, in opposition to Hegelian Marxism, whereby the historical process consists in the formation of a social movement by a proletariat which has achieved theoretical self-consciousness, Adorno's reconstruction affirms the universality of reification. Therefore, the process of historical development can only be viewed as the genesis of prevailing instrumental rationality. In the end, Adorno must renounce historical materialism's claim to mediate political praxis. Adorno also defends the legitimacy of theory independently of political interests. This does not reject the Marxist claim to socio-historical reflectivity: it seeks only to represent new forms of consciousness. For Adorno, the process of developing emancipatory consciousness as Korsch or Lukacs understood it has merged with the universal process of rationalization. Only a few diffuse forms of aesthetic awareness can structurally resist this tendency.

With Adorno, critical social philosophy becomes a pessimistic self-

4. Cf. Max Horkheimer, *Kritische Theorie. Eine Dokumentation*, ed. A. Schmidt (Frankfurt, 1968).

5. See also Albrecht Wellmer, *Critical Theory of Society, op.cit.*, pp. 9ff., 51ff.

6. M. Horkheimer, Theodor W. Adorno, "The Importance of the Body," in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (New York, 1972), p. 231.

7. F. Grenz, *Adornos Philosophie in Grundbegriffen. Auflösung einiger Deutungsprobleme* (Frankfurt, 1974), pp. 160ff.

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clarification which, given the total social reification of late capitalism, is confined to aesthetics and to a philosophical critique of the false totality.[8] Since, according to Adorno, Marx's version of class consciousness has melted away in the culture industry, only authentic art and critical philosophy can communicate modes of consciousness that escape the social coercion of identity theory. The work of art preserves a form of experience free from the conceptual domination and appropriation of reality.[9] Philosophical critique can still identify the logic of domination in the medium of conceptual thought.[10] Consequently, aesthetic theory and negative dialectics are the only means whereby a weakened critical social theory can conceptualize capitalist domination understood as the totalization of an instrumental rationality based on the principle of exchange.[11]

But Adorno's critical theory retracts both claims concerning the emancipatory significance of aesthetic theory and negative dialectics. Although it maintains its position as a coherent theoretical body generated within a specific historical context, it does not do so in the typical Marxist way as theoretical self-consciousness of an emancipatory social movement.[12] Adorno's theory is so strongly determined by its view of history as a series of catastrophes that it cannot commit itself to an idea of historical progress which goes beyond total reification. Consequently, critical theory necessarily foregoes any theoretical claim concerning possible political solutions. Given the nature of late-capitalist social systems, for Adorno, it is difficult to imagine an addressee for critical theory. Hence, the Marxian idea of a mass social movement is replaced by the idea of an experience of oppression that can be formulated only on an individual basis.

Habermas constantly returns to two of Adorno's basic philosophical assumptions. First, in the context of Adorno's critique of a philosophy of origins (*Ursprungsphilosophie*), Habermas develops both Adorno's notion of philosophy's practical self-realization — a notion he culled from Marx's early writings — and the notion of materialistic theory's reflectivity. From this, Habermas infers a sharply defined theory of historical self-consciousness. Secondly, he develops Adorno's notion of dialectic as the reconstruction of what is systematically suppressed in communicative power relations.[13] From

8. *Ibid.*, Chapters 5 and 6.

9. Adorno systematically develops this central theme in his *Aesthetische Theorie*, now in *Gesammelte Schriften* 7 (GS 7 (Frankfurt, 1970); cf. Th. Baumeister and J. Kulenkampff, "Geschichtsphilosophie und philosophische Aesthetik," *Neue Hefte für Philosophie* 5 (1974), pp. 74-104; also H. Paetzold, *Neomarxistische Aesthetik, II* (Düsseldorf, 1974), pp. 7-101.

10. "Of course thought has always sufficed concretely to characterize its own equivocation," in M. Horkheimer, Th. W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, p. 37; cf. also Grenz, *Adornos Philosophie*, Chapter 4.

11. Baumeister and Kulenkampff also hold this thesis. Cf. "Geschichtsphilosophie und philosophische Aesthetik," *op.cit.*

12. Cf. for the "Hegelian" versions of critical Marxism, Furio Cerutti, "Hegel, Lukacs, Korsch: On the Emancipatory Significance of the Dialectic in Critical Marxism," *Telos* 26 (Winter 1975-76), pp. 165-174.

13. On the reception of Adorno's critique of "ursprungsphilosophie," see Jürgen Habermas, "Literaturbericht zur philosophischen Diskussion um Marx und den Marxismus," in *Theorie und*

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this argument, Habermas infers a reconstruction of history seeking splintered and suppressed meanings. Habermas, however, adopts both of Adorno's considerations apart from their underlying intents. He proposes no premise to bind Adorno's two arguments with the critical notion of a self-restructuring culture.

To Habermas, Adorno's critique of a philosophy of origins is "based on the insight that philosophy must do without self-foundation and self-fulfillment *qua* philosophy so that philosophy *qua* the unity of theory and practice will be able to achieve both."[14] This interpretation is permissible in this particular context, but it conceals the intent of Adorno's critique. For Adorno, critical philosophy can criticize previous philosophical systems only through an awareness of their irrevocable grounding in experience. Hence, Adorno's critique of a philosophy of origins also reflects the historical inadequacy of its own criteria.[15] But Habermas' reasoning deals precisely with the historical possibility of realizing the claims contained in the critique of a philosophy of origins. In adopting Adorno's ideas, Habermas seeks a practical outcome for critical social philosophy — an alternative that Adorno pessimistically rules out in seeking an autonomous philosophy.

From the framework of Adorno's critique of Hegel, Habermas abstracts what he needs for his own dialectic. Adorno's interpretation unfolds within the tension of a critique of ideology which places the notion of a universal rationality of domination between the historical truth and the theoretical falsehood of Hegel's philoosphy, while Habermas' critique of Hegel focuses on the monological character of the concept of absolute spirit. Adorno upholds the cynical truth of Hegel's system, i.e., the view of the history of mankind's attainment of consciousness as the product of a totalitarian reason, in order to take into account the historical specificity of the particular[16] along with the tradition of leftist Hegelianism, and thus counter the system's claims.[17] On the other hand, Habermas critically confronts the philosophy of Hegel's mature system with the philosophy of intersubjectivity found in Hegel's earlier writings. The differences in Adorno's and Habermas' way of interpreting

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Praxis (Frankfurt, 1971), pp. 387ff. and pp. 435f.; on the concept of the dialectic in the context of Habermas' interpretation of Adorno, see Habermas, "Urgeschichte der Subjektivität," *op.cit.*, p. 193.

14. Jürgen Habermas, "Literaturbericht zur philosophischen Diskussion um Marx und den Marxismus," *op.cit.*, p. 436.

15. "Philosophy, which once seemed obsolete, lives on because the moment to realize it was missed. The summary judgment that it had merely interpreted the world, that resignation in the face of reality had crippled it in itself, becomes a defeatism of reason after the attempt to change the world miscarried." Adorno, *Negative Dialectics* (New York, 1973), p. 3.

16. Th. W. Adorno, "Drei Studien zu Hegel," GS 5 (Frankfurt, 1971), pp. 246ff.; see also M. Theunissen, "Hegels Lehre vom absoluten Geist als theologisch-politischer Traktat" (Berlin, 1970), pp. 24ff.

17. Jürgen Habermas, "Work and Interaction: Remarks on Hegel's Jena *Philosophy of Mind*," *Theory and Practice* (Boston, 1973), pp. 142-169. On the different approaches to Hegel by Adorno, Horkheimer and Habermas, see F.W. Schmidt, "Hegel in der kritischen Theorie der 'Frankfurter Schule'," in Oskar Negt, *Aktualität und Folgen der Philosophie Hegels* (Frankfurt, 1970), pp. 17-57.

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Hegel reveal other differences that should not be ignored, but which can be bypassed here since Habermas deals with only one theme of this critique. Adorno's method of interpretation obtains its cogency from a critique of ideology in which the notion of rationality is both assimilated and differentiated from Hegelianism. On the contrary, Habermas' interpretation departs from a critique of theory which confronts original intersubjectivity with a concept of consciousness formation based on the model of "solipsistic self-consciousness." The two interpretive modes are mutually exclusive. Adorno cannot employ an intersubjectively constituted rationality against Hegel, since his vision of history leaves no place for such a rationality. Habermas cannot reconcile the history of human consciousness with that of absolute spirit since his basic philosophical assumptions interpret the history of human consciousness quite differently. He has rejected Adorno's key philosophical notion, i.e., the historical universalization of reification. Thus, Habermas departs from Adorno with a philosophy of history rooted in entirely different concepts.

Habermas can use Adorno's theses systematically only by disregarding their historical and philosophical context. He uses Adorno's criticism of a philosophy of origins as the philosophical foundation of critical theory's claim to effectiveness, but without mentioning Adorno's philosophical relativization of this practical goal. Adorno's interpretation of Hegel is used by Habermas to stress the deep hermeneutic dimension in the concept of dialectics, but without mentioning the historical and philosophical meaning of that notion. The two interpretations do not indicate a less systematic understanding of Adorno's theory, but illustrate Habermas' distrust of the guiding idea which, in Adorno, combines these notions into a unified philosophy. Passages in Habermas' works which appear to be borrowed from Adorno are in fact critical commentaries on his philosophical assumptions. Habermas does not propose a weakened concept of critical theory. Rather, he combines his criticism of traditional theory and of Hegel with a theoretical intention different from Adorno's. Whereas Adorno's philosophy abandons classical critical theory's claims because it cannot provide a rationality immune from reification, Habermas' theory reconstructs in terms of reification a notion of rationality which can reinstate the claims abandoned in critical theory's process of self-reflection.

This difference of intention can be traced to Habermas' departure from Adorno's basic notion of rationality. Here Habermas opens the way for a reconstruction of Marxist theory. This critique, which is rooted in a different socio-historical context assumes that the differences between Habermas' and Adorno's fundamental premises precipitate: (1) differences in the way critical theory is depicted and argued, as well as (2) differences in the relation to practice.

The key notion to which Adorno and Horkheimer condense total reification in bourgeois society is the notion of rationality as identity logic. *The Dialectic of Enlightenment* reconstructs the history of civilization as the

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victorious advance of instrumentalizing rational domination. Civilization's emancipation from external nature succeeds only at the cost of excluding all communicative sensitivity. But the instrumental rationality engendered in social reproduction also interferes in the daily sphere of social behavior, so that the socialization of inner nature is increasingly distorted into the technical domination of nature. The desocialization of nature necessarily results in the desocialization of society.[18] Against identity theory and its inherent reified nature, critical theory can offer only the alternative of mimetic knowledge reactivated in the form of artwork. Only aesthetic perception can break the monopoly of conceptual knowledge and open to experience phenomena which do not conform to natural or socio-technical regulations.[19]

Historically, Adorno confronts a constellation of politically coherent capitalist societies different from the ones Marx confronted. Marx's theory is guided by the pre-theoretical experience of a working class which becomes revolutionary during social crises. Adorno makes the failure of the West European labor movement and the Stalinization of Soviet politics the central empirical phenomena of his philosophy. Fascism becomes the provisional conclusion of all history, thereby subordinating all rationalizing processes to a process of negative rationalization. Against this background, critical theory can no longer articulate the systematic educating and enlightening functions of capitalist production, but must locate emancipation below the level of all historically developed rationality. Hence this critique of instrumental rationality ultimately presupposes that only a condition of profound liberation in society can qualify as a medium for a reified common sense, i.e., as an *Eindenken der Natur*.[20] Only an aesthetic cooperation with nature would allow the domination-free interpretation of inner nature. Thus, the key to Adorno's philosophy of history is the theme of a "reconciliation with nature." Habermas, however, distrusts this idea of reconciliation. He suspects that an aesthetic communication with nature extends the model of social interaction to natural contexts, and thus overtaxes it. If the idea of reconciliation relies for its viability only on an earlier, originally theological, and theoretically no longer tenable notion, then, of course, Adorno's criteria for a truly rational society, as introduced into his philosophy of history, also becomes impractical.

By redefining the categories of rationality, Habermas has raised these objections to the idea of reconciliation[21] — objections which follow from his

18. "It is not merely that domination is paid for by the men from the objects dominated: with the objectification of spirit, the very relations of men — even those of the individual to himself — were bewitched." Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment, op.cit.*, p. 28.

19. On the theory of concepts, see Adorno, *Negative Dialectics, op.cit.*, pp. 134ff.; on the aesthetic alternative, see H. Paetzold's interpretation, *Neomarxistische Aesthetik, II, op.cit.*

20. M. Horkheimer and Th. W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment, op.cit.*, pp. 42ff. See also Th. Baumeister and J. Kulenkampff, *Geschichtsphilosophie und philosophische Aesthetik, op.cit.*, pp. 83ff.

21. First against Bloch in his Schelling essay (cf. Jürgen Habermas, "Dialektischer Idealismus

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pragmatically grounded linguistic philosophy and theory of science. As in Wittgenstein, these disciplines regard natural languages as systems of rules incorporated in structures of action; or, like Pierce, they derive the norms of scientific research from the patterns of pre-scientific forms of action.[22] Accordingly, Habermas seeks to relate forms of critical rationality and categories of social action.[23] With this pragmatic interpretation, Habermas radicalizes one of Adorno's ambivalent epistemological reflections. Adorno's philosophy of history also sees the specific forms of instrumental rationality as the objectified domination of nature, but he associates this form of rationality with the abstract activity of commodity exchange. Habermas abandons this epistemological ambivalence in favor of a pragmatic interpretation of instrumental reason. The forms of technical rationality criticized by Adorno are interpreted by Habermas as merely linguistically fixed and generalized objectifications — forms of instrumental action. Simultaneously, at the level of social reproduction, i.e., the culturally invariant dimensions of action in which for Habermas the development of human reason is supposedly embedded, communicative action assumes a position of primary importance alongside social labor. Whereas the Frankfurt School tradition deals with only the instrumental dimension of practice, Habermas deals with two types of historical action, i.e., two forms of practice: work (instrumental rationality) and interaction. While the rationalization of nature follows from the technical possibilities of social labor, the course of rationalization in society follows the patterns of intersubjective communication determined in the sphere of social interaction.

Based on this, Habermas considers Adorno's concept of rationality an invalid conflation of two distinct dimensions. Adorno succeeds in his philosophical critique of technical rationality only because he measures the abstract knowledge of instrumental reason with a type of knowledge appropriate for a symbolically structured social framework. From Habermas' perspective, Adorno has smuggled a crucial assumption into his philosophy: the rationality of appropriating nature can also follow patterns of social interaction in which individuals develop their identity by becoming conscious of their non-identity. Therefore, the cognitive mode of social reproduction can discard the coercion of identity logic and adopt the openness of an

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im Uebergang zum Materialismus-Geschichtsphilosophische Folgerungen aus Schellings Idee einer contraction Gottes," in *Theorie und Praxis, op.cit.*, pp. 172-270; part of this section has been translated into English in *Theory and Practice, op.cit.*, pp. 195-242) and in the extensive Bloch-critique (cf. Jürgen Habermas, "Ernst Bloch. Ein marxistischer Schelling," in *Philosophisch-politische Profile, op.cit.*, pp. 147-167; an excerpt from this appears in English in "A Speculative Materialist," *Telos* 33 [Fall 1977], pp. 138-141), then against Adorno (Habermas, "Urgeschichte der Subjektivität," *op.cit.*) and finally against Marcuse (Habermas, "Technology and Science as 'Ideology'," *op.cit.*, pp. 85ff) on the motif of "reconciliation with nature" in the tradition of critical theory, see the necessary differentiations in M. Theunissen, *Gesellschaft und Geschichte, op.cit.*, pp. 21ff., and now also R. Maurer, "Natur als Problem der Geschichte," in *Revolution und "Kehre"* (Frankfurt, 1975), pp. 126ff.

22. On the growing philosophical significance of the concept of action, see Richard J. Bernstein, *Praxis and Action* (Philadelphia, 1971).

23. J. Habermas, "Technology and Science as 'Ideology'," *op.cit.*, esp. pp. 85ff.

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emancipatory interpretation of nature. If instrumental reason is based on the social labor process, and since the socialization of external nature through work is a precondition of social reproduction, then Adorno's critique of instrumental reason misses its mark: it criticizes only the conceptual objectification of technical rationality, which is obviously determined by the historically invariant force of technical control over nature.[24]

Given these assumptions, Adorno's central philosophical notion of "aesthetic rationality" loses its critical force. A liberated society can no longer be founded on the two separate dimensions of social appropriation of nature and social interaction. Through anthropological and epistemological theory, Habermas develops a different philosophy of history.[25] For Habermas, the general process of civilization is no longer bound to only one rational notion spanning both nature and society but rather to two kinds of rationality based on internal and external socialization. In contrast to Adorno's one-dimensional focus, Habermas understands history as the process in which structures of both communicative and instrumental action are developed. This facilitates a critique of goal-oriented rationality which can draw upon the historical constant of a semantically constituted intersubjectivity. In Habermas' critical theory, "power and communication" replace "reason and nature."

Since Adorno's philosophy is based on the thesis of regressive cultural development, its form of presentation reflects an historical viewpoint which assumes increasing universal reification. Since Adorno's aesthetic theory argues, against any formal aesthetics, that artistic works can be understood only as "historically sedimented content,"[26] his philosophy must connect theoretical forms with their respective stage in the history of civilization. If the form of presentation of theory can be interpreted as a cognitive organization of the historical experience grounding the theory, then the form of a critical theory must also distance itself from the content of the history it criticizes. Thus, Adorno's philosophy sets its own form against the reality principle of abstract logic.

In "The Essay as Form," Adorno expands his model of non-methodological and anti-systematic theory construction in a positive direction: the essay should incorporate, prior to all scientific theory, a form of presentation on which critical theory can pattern itself. For Adorno, the essay's form of presentation is "critical theory *par excellence*."[27] Against Descartes' method

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24. See Baumeister, Kulenkampff, "Geschichtsphilosophie," *op.cit.*, pp. 99ff.

25. Habermas develops this in his anthropology lecture ("Probleme einer philosophischen Anthropologie," lecture ms. 1966-67); and later in a theory of socio-cultural universals. Cf. J. Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis* (Boston, 1975), pp. 8ff. He develops a theory of action-specific forms of experiences in the epistemological studies (first outlined in Jürgen Habermas, "Knowledge and Human Interests," in *Knowledge and Human Interests* [Boston, 1971], pp. 301-317). Both strands then enter into the Habermasian theory of history.

26. Adorno, *Aesthetische Theorie, op.cit.*, p. 15.

27. Th. W. Adorno, "Der Essay als Form," in *Noten zur Literatur*, GS 111 (Frankfurt, 1974), p. 27.

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of reflection —in reaction to which Horkheimer formulates the notion of critical theory — Adorno's essay develops a methodically broken-down non-discursive mode of argument opposed to the paradigm of scientific truth. While Horkheimer confronts Cartesian theorizing with the notion of an interest-linked socially grounded theory, Adorno treated Descartes' methodology essentially as a "negative print" of a traditional form of theory: its principle of inductive reasoning merely projects the logic of the domination of nature into the scientific treatment of the object. The essay, on the contrary, escapes scientific methodology and opts for an unforced reflection, devoid of methodological justification. Out of the tensions generated among meanings rendered through conceptualization, hermeneutically disclosed factual circumstances, and personal experience, the essay develops a kind of argumentation which does not bury the issue in methodology but unfolds it, so to speak, from within. The essay's form of presentation gives Adorno an "idea of the joy of freedom with regard to an issue, a freedom which yields from the issue more than would result from coldly compelling it into a system of ideas."[28] This notion of unforced argumentation provides the point of departure for a critical theory which will escape, even in its form, the force of instrumental reason. If philosophical thinking is to avoid imitating the dominating approach of identity logic, it must take an "uncoerced look at the object" at hand, as its own reflective posture.[29]

With this conclusion, Adorno's mode of presentation approaches an aesthetic form of experience, the mimetic rationality of which provides his philosophy with its only normative basis. With Adorno, critical theory adopts a mode of reasoning which surrenders the traditional norm of cogent methodical rigor to cautious subjective cognition. Its ideal is drawn from the mimetic accomplishment of the work of art, not from modern science's principle of reasoned proof. Habermas, however, does not depict a philosophical opposition to the rationality of domination but studies communicative forms forcibly repressed by civilization. In his work, critical theory follows the notion of an interaction free of domination, constructed on a principle coinciding with immanent self-reflection, which in turn is committed only to non-coerced argumentation. For Habermas, the form of presentation is not external to the content: one must first interpret it from the viewpoint of the theory, for the theory does not analyze its form in any special way.

In moving away from Adorno's premises, Habermas redefined critical social theory's conceptual framework in that he sees its foundations no longer merely in terms of the dominant rationality of social productivity, but also within the communicative rationality of internal socialization. Thus, the cultural constellation no longer permits totalized goal-oriented rationality to

28. *Ibid.*, p. 30.

29. Cf. Th. W. Adorno, "Anmerkungen zum philosophischen Denken," in his *Stichworte* (Frankfurt, 1969), pp. 11-19.

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be the guiding principle, but replaces it with two dimensions of development in the history of consciousenss. Habermas constructs critical theory's mode of presentation on these dimensions. Adorno's rigorous form results from the normative notion of a domination-free, mimetic appropriation of reality. Because social emancipation can result only through the liberation from reasoning which abstractly fixes the meanings of society and nature, to satisfy its own demands, a critical theory must deal with theoretical issues following the model of domination-free *Eindenken*. Habermas discards this self-imposed demand of critical theory and provides an epistemological foundation for the structure of a currently positivistic scientific rationality. Since the cognitive rationality of his theory should become clarified through historical and universal structures of action, the methodic and definitive objectification of goal-oriented rationality is granted a validity limited only to a rationalization of social productivity. In this manner, Habermas' theory reinstates the global claim of a domination-free, undistorted approach to reality — which Adorno uses to justify his own style — in a methodology of action-specific theory. Habermas converts Adorno's quest for a form of theory appropriate to the current historical state of development into the epistemological quest for a suitable methodology for critical theory. His own basic concept can reformulate the methodological problem because he no longer needs to protect the concept's appropriate mode of presentation from the methodical organization of knowledge. Indeed, his basic concept deals with the verifiability of the specifically generated medium of presentation. In order to conform to Habermas' prerequisites, critical theory must assume a form which is committed to preventing the domination of any imaginable participant in the discussion of theories instead of being concerned with non-domination regarding the object or issue at hand. Habermas resolves the question of form with reference to the communicative horizon of scientific investigation.[30] The normative implications of subject-subject relations determine Habermas' theory. His leitmotif, i.e., an interactive rationalization process, compels him to a mode of presentation based on the notion of intersubjective verifiability and discourseful theory construction. On the contrary, Adorno's perspective necessitates a form consonant with decentralized and non-methodical philosophy. Habermas converts Adorno's key principle, i.e., the principle of an argumentation both open to private experience and methodically non-determined, into a principle aimed at both methodic transparency and an ability to generalize arguments. The formal structure of Habermas' theory is oriented toward undistorted communication, not to the stylistic resistance of goal-oriented rationality.

Compared to Adorno, this mode of presenting critical theory is historically and philosophically generated by the conception of a compound socio-cultural rationalizing process and it is epistemologically grounded on Pierce's notion of the "scientific community." For Habermas, this is the

30. Cf. D. Henrich, "Kritik der Verstandigungsverhaltnisse. Laudatio für Jürgen Habermas," in J. Habermas and D. Henrich, *Zwei Reden* (Frankfurt, 1974), esp. pp. 12ff.

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communicative framework of scientific theory formation. This framework should assume the role of the transcendental "subject" in the materialistic transformation of transcendental philosophy.[31] The intersubjective clarification of meta-theoretical questions can take place in the community of scholars. In Habermas' theory this "subcultural background of all possible processes of inquiry"[32] is determined by knowledge-generating structures of discussion. In accordance with this unique interpretation, the theory justifies itself in its mode of discourse: the debates with analytic philosophy, with Gadamer's hermeneutics, and finally with Luhmann's system-theory are phases in the construction of a critical theory grounded in a general process of communicative rationalization. Thus, Habermas' theory is a scaled-down model of the structure of dialogue — a practice it subsumes within the history of human consciousness.

Habermas' attempt to derive his theory from the structure of dialogue and submit it to the demands of intersubjective verification brings to light another contrast with Adorno: the language of the two versions of critical social theory differs. Adorno's terminological conservatism is grounded in an uncoerced theoretical approach to reality. He even considers the language of critical theory in terms of objectifications generated in the history of civilization.

Adorno's "Theses on the Language of Philosophy" examine the suppression of rationality and nature in language. Inasmuch as the relation between word and thing is considered contingent, and language is interpreted merely as a system of designations, the domination of objectifying thought is interpolated into the word's content. For Adorno, language is only part of that rationality which, in identifying objects, abstracts from the richness of reality. In so doing, words disregard the structures of meaning that the thing exhibits. Against the communicative function of language, Adorno seeks to reorient philosophical thought into more open categories with the help of new configurations of historically given linguistic material: "Today the philosopher stands before the debris of language. His material is the rubble of words to which history links him; his freedom provides the only possible way out of their configurations to the compulsion of truth in them. He has as little right to conceive of a word as pre-given as to invent one."[33] Even philosophy cannot overcome the split between word and object through the power of its language, if it recognizes the mimetic qualities of language intonation. Since it cannot withdraw arbitrarily from its historical framework, critical theory can only further sensitize the existing categories to the non-identical vis-à-vis the conceptually frozen object in a new "configuration."

Habermas' theory develops in the opposite direction. Because it views itself

31. Cf. Jürgen Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests, op.cit.*, p. 6; for the notion of "Forschergemeinschaft," see Gerd Wartenberg, *Logischer Sozialismus. Die Transformation der Kantschen Transzendentalphilosophie durch Charles S. Pierce* (Frankfurt, 1971).

32. J. Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests, op.cit.*, p. 140.

33. Th. W. Adorno, "Thesen über die Sprache des Philosophen," in *Philosophische Frühschriften*, GS 1 (Frankfurt, 1973), pp. 366-371, here pp. 368ff.

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as bound to a discourse in which it must satisfy its own demands regarding competing theoretical endeavors, it cannot forego the criteria of linguistic understandability. Moreover, Habermas cannot immunize, by means of categories, a process of theoretical development which he describes as a process of self-enlightenment. Habermas' theory takes on a distinct character by introducing new linguistic material suitable to his concept of theory into the categories of a critical theory of society. En route to this linguistic self-understanding, Habermas' theory incorporates Weber's theory of action and philosophical anthropology, linguistic philosophy asnd structural functionalism. Unlike Adorno's esoteric philosophy, his theory follows a "communication model" "by penetrating into the sciences to become generalized as scientific self-reflection."[34]

In Adorno's philosophy of history the process of civilization is so consistently viewed from the perspective of expanding reification, that ultimately every move of social progress, whether in the form of enlightened class consciousness or in the form of social structures that endanger capitalism, seems to disintegrate. His critical theory does not address any social group, nor can it provide a socialization model translatable into practice. Thus, Adorno's premises leave critical theory with both dogma and resignation.

For Adorno, the Marxist model becomes problematic. He no longer expects proletarian class consciousness to be revolutionized by repressive experiences. Adorno does not doubt the economic crises forecast by Marx's critique of the political economy, but he questions its value in explaining conflict: the contradictions of capitalist accumulation no longer generate class resistance. The culture industry of late capitalism has relegated class conflict to the level of psychological maladjustment and has thus dequalified it as an intersubjectively experienced social phenomenon[35] while protecting the proletariat from physical hardship.[36]

From this, Adorno draws a conclusion which enables him to reject part of the Marxist model: the investigation of economic processes whereby capital is devalued. Since the Marxist analysis of capitalism no longer projects the historical inevitability of the formation of a proletarian class consciousness, the socio-economic necessity of conflicting standpoints disappears. Consequently, the theory can no longer rely on a politically transformable consciousness and a proletariat ready to act.

But even the second precondition of the Marxist argument, i.e., that capitalist society embodies a dimension of enlightenment, is also incompatible with Adorno's philosophy. Unlike the Marxist tradition, Adorno cannot consider the increasing socialization of labor as progress since his philosophy explains the coercive character of bourgeois society by

34. J. Habermas, "Die Aktualität Walter Benjamins," *op.cit.*, p. 320.

35. See for instance Th. W. Adorno, "Culture Industry Reconsidered," *New German Critique* 6 (Fall 1975), pp. 12-19.

36. Th. W. Adorno, "Reflexionen zur Klassentheorie," in *Soziologische Schriften* I, pp. 373-391, especially pp. 383ff.

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pointing to just such objectifications of nature-dominating rationality. If the cooperative appropriation of nature per se, as suggested in *Dialectic of Enlightenment,* initiates the development of an abstract and instrumental reason, then the work process, i.e., the mode of socialization, cannot serve as a medium for collective self-enlightenment, Hence, for Adorno, the dimension of social labor (social production) loses the importance it had in Marxist theory: both as the universal precondition for the reproduction of social systems, and as the arena for experiences of alienation and enlightenment.

Thus, Adorno must give up not only a specific class as the supporter of his theory, but also the guarantee of a historical and philosophical enlightenment. Since his critical theory recognizes historical continuity only as a reifying and instrumentalizing process, an alternative type of rationalization is unthinkable.[37] This uncertainty takes on even greater weight, for Adorno defines the present as the totalization of this rationalizing process, and must therefore understand all social actions according to the pattern of the instrumental appropriation of nature. Hence, alongside the ongoing process of reification one finds neither a supporting socio-cultural dimension of enlightenment, nor the least trace of a sphere for liberating practice — a sphere on which critical theory could stake its political claim.

In "Marginalia to Theory and Practice," Adorno drew the consequences of his analysis for the present: all previously liberating forms of political practice are now immersed in purposive rationality and reification so to leave no room for any emancipatory practice. Only completely non-instrumental action can provide enough resistance for genuine liberation: "If society's guilt complex, and the prospect of catastrophe, has really become total — and there is no reason to doubt it — then it cannot be opposed except by giving up that illusory context."[38] Artistic production is the only practical route of escape from this illusory context. Only individually produced art offers the possibility of a rationality which is able to resist reification and provide society with the possibility of liberation. Thus, Adorno sets the conditions for liberation so high that they can no longer be communicated downward to the people. Political practice becomes unthinkable since only the mimetic knowledge of reality can create the conditions for a true critique of domination, and these liberating mediations are only possible in individual artworks. Thus, Adorno gives up critical theory's claim to guide political practice since the instrumental nature of politics would draw it into the world of reification. This refusal to fall into reification both in terms of its philosophical content as well as its literary form depoliticizes Adorno for the sake of preserving its

37. Even within Adorno's argument, one can distinguish the empirical and historical-philosophical problems. On the empirical, cf. his own "Reflexionen zur Klassentheorie," *op.cit.,* and "Spätkapitalismus oder Industriegesellschaft," in his *Soziologische Schriften* I, *op.cit.,* pp. 354-370. On the historical-philosophical, see "Marginalien zur Theorie und Praxis," *ibid.,* pp. 169-192, esp. pp. 169 and 172: "Praxis was the reflex to life's exigency, and still disfigures this reflex wherever it wants to mitigate the existency."

38. Th. W. Adorno, "Marginalien zur Theorie und Praxis," in *Stichworte, op.cit.,* p. 179.

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critical power. Although Habermas' critical theory also presupposes an already integrated working class, it avoids this type of resignation since it preserves the possibility of political activity in the sphere of communicative action.

Like Adorno, Habermas is also theoretically distressed by the "embourgeoisification" of the proletariat. Yet, unlike Adorno, Habermas does not interpret this fragmentation or dissolution of revolutionary class consciousness in the 1950s and 1960s in terms of a theory of the culture industry. Rather, Habermas distinguishes between advanced and liberal capitalist societies. Thus, he sees late capitalism as a politically and technically restructured stage of capitalism — unlike in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment,* which sees this stage of capitalism as restructured by the culture industry. Habermas suspects that the economically determined class structure of capitalism has not been abolished, but has been concealed behind a net of apparently technical and administrative requirements. This concealment is made possible both by the fact that mass physical suffering has been reduced through improvements in the productive forces, and by continuous state intervention disguised as preventive measures but meant to guarantee mass loyalty.

The uninterrupted growth of late capitalism has concealed class antagonism so well that it no longer generates an enlightening experience resulting in revolutionary action among workers. Habermas no longer counts on a proletariat politicized by the pressure of experience and organized in a learning process: "the exclusion from control over the means of production is no longer bound up to such an extent with deprivation of social rewards (income, security, education, and so forth) that this objective situation would still in any way be experienced subjectively as proletarian. And any class consciousness, especially a revolutionary class consciousness, is not to be found in the main strata of the working class today."[39] Habermas draws the same conclusions as Adorno, i.e., that the classical pattern for successfully connecting theory to practice loses the relevance it has had in the history of Marxism. "Every revolutionary theory, under these circumstances, lacks those to whom it is addressed; therefore, arguments can no longer be transformed into slogans. Even if there still were the critical mind, its heart is lacking; and thus today Marx would have to abandon his hope that theory can become a material force once it has taken hold of the masses."[40] While for Adorno this empirical indeterminacy gradually becomes resignation, Habermas confronts it with an historical and philosophical alternative. Using "interaction" as a form of action viable in all social systems, and therefore also in the context of historical reification, Habermas is able to salvage the possibility of a theoretically guided political practice. Thus, for Habermas, the practical focus of critical theory shifts to that dimension of social reproduction in which

39. J. Habermas, "Between Philosophy and Science: Marxism as Critique," in *Theory and Practice, op.cit.,* pp. 195ff; here p. 196. Cf. also his *Legitimation Crisis, op.cit.,* pp. 37ff.

40. J. Habermas, "Between Philosophy and Science: Marxism as Critique," *op.cit.,* pp. 196-197.

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subjects interpret their own needs and intentions. This communicative action should generate both a meaningful self-definition and a critique of domination through a process of collective social criticism which would reach the social space where theoretical enlightenment can be politically organized. As such, Habermas is able to reintroduce the historical dimension of social self-enlightenment which early critical theory had located in social labor and which Adorno has projected beyond the reach of social actions, i.e., into art.

The distinction between "work" and "interaction" here allows Habermas to reinterpret the classical positions of critical theory.[41] This distinction between instrumental and communicative action in which he had anchored the natural and the social sciences respectively, corresponds to his earlier distinction between "technology" and "practice."[42] For Habermas, "technology" refers to the objectified natural and social processes initiated by science, while "practice" deals with norms-oriented communication among socialized subjects.[43] Habermas reinterprets instrumental reification, to which Adorno had reduced all forms of action, as the supremacy of technical action, thus salvaging the sphere of need-guided and norms-oriented communication processes. Consequently, the problem of mediating theory and political practice focuses on the question of how theory as critique can connect with the interactive practice of socialized subjects — a practice which, despite all of the instrumentalization in late-capitalist politics, remains a necessary socio-cultural form of socialization. In this sense, even Habermas' "Technology and Science as 'Ideology'" is a contribution to his solution of the problem of theory and practice. This essay deals with how technologized political domination, detached from the normative and cultural interpretations of life and tailored to meet capitalist requirements, can be challenged by organizing the still intact spaces of intersubjectively constituted actions.[44]

By stating the problem in this manner, Habermas redefines the Marxist notion of political practice. On the one hand, Marx combines the emphasis on working conditions with the political and economic deciphering of economic crisis situations in the concept of the "proletariat." Thus, politics takes on the character of revolutionary class struggle. On the other hand, Habermas expands politics to include interacting social relations dealing with both the development of revolutionary consciousness and the formulation of political strategies. While the Marxist notion of politics gives primacy to strategic aspects of class struggle over both theoretical enlightenment and the

41. On both dimensions of the connection between theory and practice see J. Habermas, "Some Difficulties in the Attempt to Link Theory and Praxis," in *Theory and Practice, op.cit.*, pp. 1-40; here esp. pp. 2ff.

42. See J. Habermas, "The Classical Doctrine of Politics in Relation to Social Philosophy," in *Theory and Practice*, pp. 41-81; Habermas, "Praktische Folgen des wissenschaftlich-technischen Fortschritt," in *Theorie und Praxis, op.cit.*, pp. 336-358.

43. J. Habermas, "The Classical Doctrine of Politics," *op.cit.*, esp. pp. 41f.; this distinction is at the basis of the study on "Technology and Science as 'Ideology'," *op.cit.*

44. Habermas, *Theory and Practice, op.cit.*, pp. 195ff. Also see his *Theorie und Praxis, op.cit.*, Chapters 5 and 7.

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development of class consciousness, Habermas tends to emphasize these communicative prerequisites.[45] Thus, Habermas focuses on a problematic dimension of Marx's notion of politics. In various versions of Marxist theory, political action has often been so unconcerned with its historical preconditions that politics often referred simply to the strategic action of an already politically unified class.[46] Consequently, Marxist theory was unable to even introduce its own critique into social action, and to explain the development of conflicting social groups. Habermas' theory provides precisely the needed corrective for Marxism — though at the expense of clarity of strategy.[47] Symbolically mediated interaction provides the framework in which the formation of opposition or class consciousness can be conceived, not as the emancipation of a monological collective, but as the interactive learning process of all members.[48] In the further differentiation between communicative action and reflective dialogue (discourse), Habermas' account provides the theoretical tools with which, using the mode of psychoanalytical therapy, he interprets the relation between enlightenment and political action as the self-reflective process of suppressed groups.[49]

Critical Marxism has reacted defensively to Habermas' modification of critical theory. From the perspective of a Marxism immunized against advances in alternative theories, Habermas' approach was immediately seen as a mere "bourgeois" deviation. The comparison of Adorno and Habermas, however, indicates that these shifts are not a matter of personal theoretical preferences but reflect a systematic turn in critical theory. Unlike Adorno's philosophy, which, disappointed at the historical loss of emancipatory possibilities,[50] retreats to a hermetic mode of description not immediately connected to political practice, Habermas draws other conclusions. He reiterates critical theory's self-understanding as a theory grounded in the historical process meant to mediate politics. Furthermore, he does not reconstruct this self-conception on the basis of a philosophy of history or social production, but in terms of instrumental and communicative action.[51]

Habermas abandons Adorno's "strategy of hibernation" by distinguishing the social appropriation of nature from social interaction. Thus, he can counterpose real historical emancipation to the labor process understood merely as instrumental action. As a result, critical theory can again present

45. Cf. Habermas, "Some Difficulties in the Attempt to Link Theory and Praxis," *op.cit.*, pp. 28ff.

46. O. Negt and A. Kluge, *Oeffentlichkeit und Erfahrung. Zur Organisations-analyse von bürgerlicher und proletarischer Oeffentlichkeit* (Frankfurt, 1972), pp. 410ff.

47. O. Negt, "Revolution und Geschichte. Eine Kontroverse mit Jürgen Habermas," in his *Politik als Protest* (Frankfurt, 1971), pp. 87-101.

48. Cf. M. Vesters, "Soldarisierung als historischer Lernprozess," in D. Kerbs, *Die hedonistische Linke* (Neuwied and Berlin, 1970), pp. 193-198.

49. Cf. J. Habermas, "Some Difficulties in the Attempt to Link Theory and Praxis," *op.cit.*, pp. 25ff.

50. See M. Riedels' crude sketch, "Arbeit und Interaktion — zum Handlungsbegriff," in *Universitax* XXX (1975), pp. 523-532.

51. J. Habermas, "Die Aktualität Walter Benjamins," *op.cit.*, p. 321.

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itself as the expression of a general historical and at the same time interactive and educational process, consciously dealing with political practice: Habermas' theory is no longer a philosophy of history seeking to interpret its own historical experience, but utilizes the basic assumptions of a general theory of social action.[52] This emphasis on the socio-cultural rationalizing process, which shapes all of Habermas' thought, reduces critical theory's rigor. Now, social emancipation, i.e., the construction of a society free of domination, is seen in terms of interaction relations and, therefore, no longer a function of the way society appropriates nature. Habermas de-emphasizes the importance of "social labor process," thus rendering nature unproblematic. Finally, he defines the structures of action, on whose directed development he bases his theory of history, as intersubjectively constituted and linguistically structured social relations. Hence, the structure of linguistically organized intersubjectivity becomes crucial for critical theory, both from an ethical as well as an epistemological perspective. Through this linguistic turn, critical theory becomes a theory of social communication.

52. See W. Kuhlmann, *Reflexion und kommunikative Erfahrung* (Frankfurt, 1975), pp. 13ff.; on Adorno cf. R. Klein and H.G. Kippenberg, "Zu einer Theorie von Geschichtserfahrung," *Saeculum* XXVI (1975), pp. 128-148.

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OFFENSIVE CRITICAL THEORY? REPLY TO HONNETH

by James Schmidt

Adorno once suggested that a commentator was almost invariably faced with the alternative sins of pedantry or parasitism. Of necessity my comments on Axel Honneth's discussion of Habermas' effort to move beyond a "defensive posture" and attempt to revive the practical intentions of critical social theory will partake of a little of both. My comments accept enough of Honneth's basic argument to follow the general outlines of his argument. Like him, I think that Habermas is best understood not as a break with critical theory but rather as an effort to recapture some of the offensive thrust that can be found in Horkheimer's essays of the 1930s without forsaking the crucial step that Adorno had taken by the 1940s: a detaching of critical theory from any reliance on class agents as traditionally conceived within Marxist theory. Unlike him, I am not at all sure how successful Habermas has been in this effort.

Hence, in what follows, I will be parasitic in my elaboration of what I take to be the basic thrust of Honneth's argument, and will content myself for the most part to elaborating certain matters in a slightly different fashion, and pedantic in my insistence that Habermas has not tied matters up quite so neatly as Honneth suggests. In the course of my further elaboration, I will make use of recent discussions of Adorno's work which force a modification in the content of Honneth's argument while, in framing my doubts about the success of Habermas' achievement, I will draw on some recent criticisms of Habermas. If, in the end, my parasitic-pedantic antics leave things much messier than Honneth does, I hope it is clear that they are motivated less by the sense that there is nothing of significance in Habermas' effort than by the conviction that in a very fundamental sense Habermas' *problems* are exemplary in being at least some of the major problems which any meaningful social theory will have to face. Even in the midst of birthday celebrations it is more honest to face the problems than it is to proclaim them solved.

The Offensive Theory of the 1930s: Horkheimer's Model

In order to understand what it is that Adorno and Habermas are responding to, I want to outline briefly a few significant problems that arise in the course of Horkheimer's familiar discussion of the definitive features of critical theory. In terms of differences in concept formation, Horkheimer distinguishes critical from traditional theory on two related levels. First, with regard to the genesis and derivation of concepts he argues that while traditional theories employ a model of logical subsumption whereby a hierarchy of genera and species are placed in a non-contradictory, primarily static

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ordering, critical theory rests on the "unfolding of a single existential judgment."[1] The various concepts employed by critical theory are claimed to derive from an analysis of the trajectory of an exchange economy that leads to an ever more comprehensive rationalization of all elements within society.[2] Secondly, Horkheimer claims that critical theory's concepts are something more than simple "shorthand" expressions useful in ordering a complex reality; rather, they represent "bitter reality" itself.[3] Thus, while both traditional and critical theories engage in an abstract deduction of concepts, Horkheimer claims that the abstraction process in critical theory reproduces the abstraction process inherent in a society based on exchange.[4]

From this we can see that critical theory wages a struggle on two fronts. Against the metaphysical hypostatization of "totality" as a transcendent, unchanging realm, Horkheimer invokes a materialist social theory. Totality has meaning only insofar as it refers to society and hence is open to empirical investigations.[5] Against the positivist attempt to strip totality of all meaning by creating a theoretical language rooted in individual protocol statement, Horkheimer invokes a totalizing approach to the study of the social phenomena.[6]

It is on this basis that critical theory can claim to embody what Habermas has subsequently termed a "practical intent." Since its categories are real categories that confront a potentially active subject as "real necessity," it is possible for theory, by articulating this necessity to the subject, to serve as a means toward enlightenment. "If...the theoretician and his specific object are seen as forming a dynamic unity with the oppressed class, so that his presentation of societal contradictions is not merely an expression of the concrete historical situation but also a force within it to stimulate change, then his real function emerges. The course of the conflict between the advanced sectors of the class and the individuals who speak out the truth concerning it, as well as of the conflict between the most advanced sectors with their theoreticians and the rest of the class, is to be understood as a process of interaction in which awareness comes to flower along with its liberating but also its aggressive forces which incite while also requiring discipline."[7] The basic logic behind this argument is not unlike that employed by Lukacs in *History and Class Consciousness.* There, he argued that it was possible for the proletariat to form and educate itself into a universal subject because it represents the point where the "genesis and

1. Max Horkheimer, "Critical Theory and Traditional Theory," in *Critical Theory* (New York, 1972), pp. 224, 227.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 225.
3. Horkheimer, "The Latest Attack on Metaphysics," in *Critical Theory*, p. 165.
4. Horkheimer, "Critical Theory and Traditional Theory," pp. 200, 226, 228. The same point is made in the 1857 introduction to Marx's *Grundrisse.*
5. Horkheimer, *Sozialphilosophische Studien* (Frankfurt, 1972), p. 41. Cf. "Materialism and Metaphysics," *Critical Theory*, pp. 17-18.
6. "Latest Attack...," p. 159.
7. "Critical Theory and Traditional Theory," p. 215. See also p. 217.

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history" of the social totality coincide. Because the proletariat encounters the categories of political economy not as unfathomable abstractions but rather as the conditions of its day to day existence, Lukacs argued that it is possible for the proletariat to overcome the reification that plagues bourgeois philosophy and recognize that what has been presented as an abstract and immutable relation among things is in fact a social relation which might be altered through political action.[8]

This, I take it, is what Honneth would designate as the "offensive" conception of critical theory, which Habermas seeks to recapture without buying into the assumptions that are made here about the status of the proletariat as a potential revolutionary subject. It is clear that by the 1941 "Notes on Institute Activities," in which Horkheimer offered a concise redefinition of the conceptual basis of critical theory, this general approach had been replaced with something much closer to Adorno's notion of immanent critique.[9] If this announces what Honneth would characterize as the "defensive posture" of critical theory in the wake of the triumph of fascism and the crushing of the European labor movement, then it is necessary to elaborate a bit more clearly what is involved.

Reconciliation with Nature or Immanent Critique? Adorno's Stance

Central to Honneth's discussion of Adorno's defensive posture is the claim that "the key to Adorno's philosophy of history is the theme of a 'reconciliation with nature'."[10] Faced with the failure of the European labor movements and the Stalinization of Soviet politics, Adorno, according to Honneth, bases his conception of emancipatory critique "below the level of all historically developed rationality." The organon of critical theory shifts from a dialogue with active subjects to a reliance on a conception of theory patterned on the model of aesthetic mimesis. For the critique of Adorno that Honneth reconstructs from Habermas' brief comments on Adorno to be compelling it is necessary to show that Adorno's notion of a model of reconciliation with nature is both a substitute for Horkheimer's 1930s class-based model of emancipation and, in a significant way, central to the method of "immanent critique," which was taken over by critical theory from Adorno in the early years of the American exile. Some recent discussions of Adorno raise problems on both counts.

With regard to the first point, Susan Buck-Morss has shown most convincingly that efforts to portray Adorno's philosophy as a *response* to the rise of fascism are unconvincing since in all of its essentials Adorno's later philosophy was present as early as 1931 *Antrittsvorlesung* "The Actuality of

8. Georg Lukacs, *History and Class Consciousness* (Cambridge, Mass., 1971), pp. 159-172; see my discussion, "The Concrete Totality and Lukacs' Theory of Proletarian *Bildung*," in *Telos* No. 24 (1975), pp. 19-34. Cf. Horkheimer's rather Lukacsian reading of Kant, "Critical Theory and Traditional Theory," pp. 203-204.

9. Max Horkheimer, "Notes on Institute Activities," *Studies in Philosophy and Social Science* No. 9 (1941), pp. 123-125.

10. Axel Honneth, "Communication and Reconciliation," in this issue.

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Philosophy." Hence, while a disillusionment with the prospects for an emancipatory social movement may well account for *Horkheimer's adoption* of Adorno's perspective as his own in 1941, it cannot account for the original formulation of the notion.[11] Indeed, what is striking about Adorno's notion, as Buck-Morss also suggests, is its remarkable plasticity. Originating under the influence of Walter Benjamin's *Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels*, it could be reformulated — as Gillian Rose has suggested in a study that virtually ignores Adorno's early work [12] — quite consistently in terms of the Marxian analysis of value, and elaborated in terms of a generalization of Marx's critique of the commodity form. In light of this plasticity, I would suggest that we would proceed best by bracketing the substantive basis of the approach — be it a Benjaminesque redemption of nature or a Marxian generalization of the commodity form — and examine the structure of Adorno's procedure itself.

In his most concise formulation of his method, Adorno proposes a "reciprocal criticism of the universal and the particular" that would consist of "identifying acts of judgment whether the concept does justice to what it covers, and whether the particular fulfills its concept."[13] The subject which for Horkheimer was at once inside and outside social reality here is replaced by the *concept* which is both contained in social reality and yet resists identification with this reality. This procedure is followed both in Adorno's writings on sociology and in his cultural criticism. For instance, in his approach to the concept of society, Adorno stresses the extent to which this concept itself, deriving from the Third Estate, is inherently critical since it projects an order of freedom, satisfaction of needs, and human happiness which contemporary societies do not live up to.[14] The historical aura which clings to the concept of society cannot be merely shrugged off in a process of redefinition that would equate society with the contemporary state of social affairs. Rather, present-day society must be held accountable for its failure to conform to the concept of society itself. Similarly, cultural artifacts are not exhausted by their "being-in-itself" but rather embody a concept that transcends their present form and implies a critique of the social life processes in which they are immersed.[15]

Thus, to restate this procedure in terms similar to those which have been

11. Susan Buck-Morss, *The Origin of Negative Dialectics* (New York, 1977), esp. pp. xii-xiii, and 24-32.

12. Gillian Rose, "How is Critical Theory Possible?" *Political Studies*, Vol. 24, pp. 69ff., and *The Melancholy Science: An Introduction to the Thought of Theodor W. Adorno* (London, 1978), pp. 27-28, 46-50. The latter account is not unmarred by a rather uncritical attitude toward Marx; see p. 141. Unfortunately, Rose's review of Buck-Morss' book in *History and Theory*, 18:1, pp. 126ff., rather than actually engaging Buck-Morss' argument on a serious level, lapses into an exercise in self-promotion, in essence suggesting that Buck-Morss should have written Rose's book.

13. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics* (New York, 1973), p. 146. Cf. *Positivist Dispute* (London, 1976), pp. 69, 117, and *Prisms* (London, 1967), pp. 19ff.

14. See Adorno's essay, "Society," in *Salmagundi*, Vol. 10-11 (1969-70). and *Aspects of Sociology* (Boston, 1972), pp. 16ff.

15. *Prisms*, pp. 22-23.

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used before in discussing Horkheimer's essays, the critical theorist plays off that "real necessity" uncritically grasped by empirical social research against the concept itself, which remains to some extent immune from falsification by this evidence and thus transcends the realm of necessity. Empirical research must remain aware that the condition of its success is tied to the reification brought about by exchange society. The concept must never be interpreted as simply an approximation of reality and thus as standing in need of continual adjustment.[16]

This formulation is open to criticism on two fronts. First, it can be charged that such a view of concept formation serves to insure that large areas of social theory are removed from critical reflection in the very act that transforms them into the agents of criticism. By claiming that the concept cannot be viewed as an approximation of reality that must continually adjust itself so as to attain a more perfect congruence between theory and reality, Adorno seems to leave open the possibility that there will be little or no ability to discard concepts that no longer bear a relation to reality. His defense of the concept of the proletariat is a crucial case in point. While defending the concept from falsification through the use of survey data, Adorno argues that even if such research "provided the statistically overwhelming evidence that workers no longer consider themselves to be workers and deny that there still exists such a thing as proletariat, the non-existence of the proletariat would in no way be proved."[17] Now, insofar as Adorno is pointing to either the inadequacies of survey research, which his paper so well indicates, or to the fact that for Marx the category of proletariat is a logical construct, the argument is sound. But it does raise the troubling questions of what it would take to convince Adorno that the category of proletariat is totally useless in dealing with advanced industrial societies and that a theory which continued to employ such a notion would be asking reality to measure up to a concept that no longer seems at all adequate. In short: do "concepts" have a life span? Can they hold their non-identity with reality indefinitely?

Second, it can be asked what status these concepts have with respect to individuals other than the theorist who employs them. Habermas, for instance, has argued that immanent criticism can no longer have the practical effect of enlightenment since "the bourgeois consciousness has become cynical."[18] The model of immanent criticism that Adorno derived from the work of Karl Kraus, whose readings he attended while studying music in Vienna, cannot ignore the fact that Kraus himself realized that his critique was dependent on a consciousness that could be aware of the outrages which had been committed on language. Explaining why he had remained silent on the subject of Hitler for nine months after his rise to power, Kraus wrote, "The Word fell asleep, as that world awoke."

Adorno is aware of both of these lines of criticism and has suggested

16. *Positivist Dispute*, pp. 12, 75, 23, 111-114.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 84. Cf. Adorno, "Is Marx Obsolete?" *Diogenes*, No. 64 (1969), pp. 1-16.
18. Habermas, *Zur Rekonstruktion des historischen Materialismus* (Frankfurt, 1976), p. 10.

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answers, which, even if they are not completely convincing, at least suggest the general path on which a response to Adorno might have to be framed. In response to the first criticism, the apparent inviolability of his central concepts, Adorno does suggest that concepts do have a sort of natural history. They do decay, wither, and die off.[19] Yet, his criteria for judging the relative health of concepts remains unclear. For instance, continuing his discussion of the status of the category of proletariat, he goes on to say, "such subjective findings would have to be compared with objective findings, such as the position of those questioned in the productive process, their control or lack of control over the means of production, their societal power or powerlessness.... Not only theory but also its absence becomes a material force when it seizes the masses.... If no one in fact knows any more that he is a worker, then this affects the inner composition of the concept of the worker even if its objective definition...is still fulfilled."[20] But it still might be asked if the concept of worker is simply *altered*, into something like a notion of "class unconsciousness," an alteration that would still allow us to continue to work within a now inverted set of Marxian concepts, or rendered irrelevant, in which case we would do better to look for other categories to hold up against reality.

With regard to the second objection — an objection more relevant for Habermas' later development and transformation of Adorno's approach — Adorno in effect concedes the point. In his essay "Cultural Criticism and Society," he notes that with total reification, the immanent method is "dragged into the abyss by its object." And in *Minima Moralia*, he notes that when critics confront the bourgeoisie with its own norms, the ruling stratum is left "with no other defense than to reject the very principle by which society was judged, its own morality."[21] Thus, the immanent method can only claim to provide the possibility of a critic noting discrepancies between concept and reality. Adorno does not claim that this operation can have practical consequences for anyone else.

This, I would argue, is the methodological essence of the "defensive posture" elaborated on a sufficiently abstract level to place aside the question of whether or not one must invoke the phantom of a "reconciliation with nature" to substantiate or refute the posture. I have elaborated Adorno's procedures on this level in order to suggest that even if the notion of such a reconciliation is placed in abeyance, problems still remain. And, further, I want to suggest that Habermas' efforts to remedy the practical defects of Adorno's approach can be better understood if they are read on this level.

Reclaiming Practical Intentions? Habermas' Modifications

As early as his 1963 contributions to the "Positivist Dispute," Habermas attempted to underwrite Adorno's conception of criticism with arguments

19. Buck-Morss, pp. 54-62, develops this point.
20. *Positivist Dispute*, p. 84.
21. *Prisms*, p. 34, *Minima Moralia* (London, 1974), p. 93, and cf. p. 22.

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that would give some reasons for feeling that criticism could indeed have a practical result. In general, these take the form of implying that what Adorno claims holds true for the critic can in fact be seen as an imperative for all members of society. For instance, Habermas interprets Adorno's discussion of the critic's attempt at interpreting the "physiognomy of totality" in terms of a "natural hermeneutics of social life-world."[22] The hope here seems to be that it is possible to locate at a level at which the simultaneous immanent yet transcendent status which Horkheimer imputed to the proletariat and Adorno imputed to the concept can be claimed to be present for all members of the species. The subsequent development of the argument for an "emancipatory interest" immanent in communicative interaction can be derived from this impetus.

Knowledge and Human Interests represents Habermas' initial, and in many respects most compelling, statement of his effort to redraw the demarcation between critical and traditional theory. In place of the somewhat amorphous term "traditional theory," Habermas there delineated two types of theoretical activities, subsumable under the knowledge-constitutive interests of purposive-rational action and communicative interaction.[23] As distinguished from those theoretical activities governed by the "emancipatory interest," both the natural and hermeneutic sciences fall prey to the objectivism and ultimately foreclose reflection. In contrast the critical theory that remains loyal to the imperatives of the emancipatory interest recognizes that in reflection knowledge and interest are one: in other words, the process of reflection reconstructs traces of suppressed dialogues and thus intervenes in the formative processes (*Bildung*) of the species.[24] In his original formulation of the argument, Habermas claims to have located something akin to Horkheimer's class subject and Adorno's resistant concept on the level of ordinary language. The mere act of speaking is claimed to intend a domain in which communication free of domination is possible.[25]

However, the position cannot be held, as Habermas, with admirable honesty, has been among the first to admit. Criticisms of the program outlined in *Knowledge and Human Interests* have led to a number of modifications that in effect throw into question the assumption that Habermas has made a significant advance beyond the dead end that it is claimed Adorno's work represents.

First of all, the claim that each speech act intends a complete understanding achieved through non-coercive discourse cannot be maintained. One would have to have a much more naive view of language than Habermas in fact has to adhere to such an argument for long. Habermas now makes a

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22. *Positivist Dispute*, pp. 32, 134.

23. Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests* (Boston, 1972), pp. 191-213. For a reconstruction of the argument see Thomas McCarthy, *The Critical Theory of Jürgen Habermas* (Cambridge, Mass., 1978), pp. 53ff., a model of lucid interpretation.

24. *Knowledge and Human Interests*, pp. 197-198, 212.

25. This theme was present as early as the *Positivist Dispute*, pp. 143-144, 219.

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distinction between ordinary speech (or "life practices") and discourse itself. It is only within discourses proper, which "test the truth claims of opinions (and norms) that speakers no longer take for granted,"[26] that one can invoke the implicit premise of unrestrained discourse. It is, of course, a contradiction in terms to enter a situation of discourse without the intended telos of complete and unrestrained discussion as a regulative ideal. But it is not clear that anything within the various other language games of ordinary language can be said to impel speakers to enter discourse.

Second, the initial close connection between reflection, knowledge and interest has had to be broken up to respond to criticism that the psychoanalytic model of the reconstruction of distorted communication cannot be applied to society as a whole. As a result, Habermas now posits a distinction between "reflection" and "reconstruction." "Self-reflection brings to consciousness those determinants of a self-formative process of cultivation and spiritual formation (*Bildung*)" and thereby "embraces the particulars, the specific course of self-formation of an individual subject." In contrast, "rational reconstructions...deal with anonymous rule systems" and "thus do not encompass subjectivity." Hence, reconstructions can only provide a *framework* for a critical theory of society and may "serve" reflection, but cannot be claimed to have practical consequences.[27]

Finally, these two alterations seem to necessitate the separation of knowledge from processes of enlightenment. While Habermas seems to intend this as an analytic separation, in the light of a recent criticism by Richard Bernstein, the separation seems to portend much more. Bernstein argues that even if we grant Habermas all of his assumptions about the tendency immanent in communication to intend a realm of discourse free from domination, we in fact fall far short of what Habermas would seemingly want to prove. If *all* speech entails this telos, then we need an account of what it is that "leads human beings to overcome forms of distortive communication and work toward the conditions required for ideal speech. What seems to be lacking here is any illumination on the problem of human agency and motivation."[28] Reposing this objection in terms suggested by Franz Neumann, Habermas has at best provided a communicative reformulation of the "juridical" component of political freedom (i.e., classical liberal negative freedom). While this is no small achievement (if indeed it can be done) it still leaves open to analysis the problem of the volitional component.[29]

Even more forcefully, Tom McCarthy has suggested that in his efforts to answer hemeneutically minded critics, Habermas has placed an emphasis on the "reconstructive" side of his theory to the virtual exclusion of a con-

26. Habermas, "Postscript to *Knowledge and Human Interests*," *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, Vol. 3 (1973), p. 168; *Theory and Practice* (Boston, 1973), p. 18.

27. *Theory and Practice*, pp. 23-24; "Postscript...," pp. 182ff.

28. Richard Bernstein, *The Reconstruction of Political and Social Theory* (New York, 1976), pp. 223-224.

29. Franz Neuman, "The Concept of Political Freedom," in *The Democratic and Authoritarian State* (New York, 1956).

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sideration of the way in which practical critical reflection takes place on the mundane level of dialogue and discourse. Even if Habermas is successful in elaborating a theory of communicative competence, "the critical theorist can claim no monopoly on truth; critique cannot be pursued in isolation from the attempt to come to an understanding with others. In short it remains the case that 'in a process of enlightenment there can be only participants'."[30] The hiatus between reconstruction and reflection becomes one between knowledge and processes of enlightenment. In the end, Habermas' reconstruction of universal pragmatics seems to maintain the same distance from the practical domain of communicative interaction as Adorno's resigned stance before "the debris of language."

Hence, while I accept for different reasons Honneth's characterization of Adorno — "Adorno's premises leave critical theory with both dogma and resignation"[31] — I find it difficult to see in what fashion Habermas has managed to overcome the dilemma. In place of dogma and resignation we now have a bewildering series of evolutionary series that seems above all to be aimed at insuring that within the various classifications of learning processes a niche will be left that will insure the continued existence of critical theory. While it is absurd to accuse a thinker who has remained as open to criticism as Habermas of dogma and while he has managed to avoid the pathos of resignation that can too easily pass for a critical attitude, it has become unclear, to say the least, what the present status of a social theory with practical intentions is, beyond a niche suspended neatly above a taxonomy of cognitive interests and models of social evolution. Paul Ricoeur once stated, "If philosophy is to survive, it is not by inciting methodological schisms."[32] Looking across the taxonomy that has resulted from Habermas' efforts to save the privileged status of critical theory, one is tempted to say the same of it.

30. McCarthy, p. 357; see also pp. 353, 377-380, 386.
31. Honneth, in this issue of *Telos*.
32. Ricoeur, *The Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur* (Boston, 1978), p. 150. For a more general discussion of the problems of a "niche strategy," see C. Fred Alford, "The Relationship between the Philosophy of Science and the Critique of 'Technocracy' in Marcuse and Habermas," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Texas at Austin, 1979, pp. 254-257.

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BLACK PARTICULARITY RECONSIDERED

by Adolph L. Reed Jr.

Over forty years ago Benjamin pointed out that "mass reproduction is aided especially by the reproduction of masses."[1] This statement captures the central cultural dynamic of a "late" capitalism. The triumph of the commodity form over every sphere of social existence has been made possible by a profound homogenization of work, play, aspirations and self-definition among subject populations — a condition Marcuse has characterized as one-dimensionality.[2] Ironically, while U.S. radicals in the late 1960s fantasized about a "new man" in the abstract, capital was in the process of concretely putting the finishing touches on *its new individual.* Beneath the current black-female-student-chicano-homosexual-old-young-handicapped, etc., etc., *ad nauseum*, "struggles" lies a simple truth: there is no coherent opposition to the present administrative apparatus.

Certainly, repression contributed significantly to the extermination of opposition and there is a long record of systematic corporate and state terror, from the Palmer Raids to the FBI campaign against the Black Panthers. Likewise, cooptation of individuals and programs has blunted opposition to bourgeois hegemony throughout this century, and cooptative mechanisms have become inextricable parts of strategies of containment. However, repression and cooptation can never fully explain the failure of opposition, and an exclusive focus on such external factors diverts attention from possible sources of failure within the opposition, thus paving the way for the reproduction of the pattern of failure. The opposition must investigate its own complicity.

During the 1960s theoretical reflexiveness was difficult because of the intensity of activism. When sharply drawn political issues demanded unambiguous responses, reflection on unintended consequences seemed treasonous. A decade later, coming to terms with what happened during that period is blocked by nostalgic glorification of fallen heroes and by a surrender which Gross describes as the "ironic frame-of-mind".[3] Irony and nostalgia are two sides of the coin of resignation, the product of a cynical inwardness that makes retrospective critique seem tiresome or uncomfortable.[4]

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1. Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" in *Illuminations* (New York, 1968), p. 251.
2. Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society* (Boston, 1964).
3. David Gross, "Irony and the 'Disorders of the Soul'," *Telos* (Winter, 1977-78), p. 167.
4. Possible sources of the left's failure to interpret its past meaningfully are discussed also by Christopher Lasch , "The Narcissist Society," *New York Review of Books XXIII* (September 30, 1976), p. 5 ff; Russell Jacoby, "The Politics of Objectivity: Notes on the U.S. Left," *Telos*

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At any rate, things have not moved in an emancipatory direction despite all claims that the protest of the 1960s has extended equalitarian democracy. In general, opportunities to determine one's destiny are no greater now than before and, more importantly, the critique of life-as-it-is disappeared as a practical activity; i.e., an ethical and political commitment to emancipation seems no longer legitimate, reasonable or valid. The amnestic principle, which imprisons the social past, also subverts any hope, which ends up seeking refuge in the predominant forms of alienation.

This is also true in the black community. Black opposition has dissolved into celebration and wish fulfillment. Today's political criticism within the black community — both Marxist-Leninist and nationalist — lacks a base and is unlikely to attract substantial constituencies. This complete collapse of political opposition among blacks, however, is anomalous. From the 1956 Montgomery bus boycott to the 1972 African Liberation Day demonstration, there was almost constant political motion among blacks. Since the early 1970s there has been a thorough pacification; or these antagonisms have been so depoliticized that they can surface only in alienated forms. Moreover, few attempts have been made to explain the atrophy of opposition within the black community.[5] Theoretical reflexiveness is as rare behind Dubois' veil as on the other side!

This critical failing is especially regrettable because black radical protests and the system's adjustments to them have served as catalysts in universalizing one-dimensionality *and* in moving into a new era of monopoly capitalism. In this new era, which Piccone has called the age of "artificial negativity," traditional forms of opposition have been made obsolete by a new pattern of social management.[6] Now, the social order legitimates itself by integrating potentially antagonistic forces into a logic of centralized administration. Once integrated, these forces regulate domination and prevent disruptive excess. Furthermore, when these internal regulatory mechanisms do not exist, the system must create them. To the extent that the black community has been pivotal in this new mode of administered domination, reconstruction of the trajectory of the 1960s' black activism can throw light on the current situation and the paradoxes it generates.

A common interpretation of the demise of black militance suggests that the

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(Winter 1977-78), pp. 74-88 and *Social Amnesia: A Critique of Conformist Psychology From Adler to Laing* (Boston, 1975), pp. 101-118; and by Andrew Feenberg, "Paths to Failure: The Dialectics of Organization and Ideology in the New Left" and David Gross, "Cultural Life-Style and Cultural Criticism," both forthcoming, along with other papers from the Symposium on Race, Politics and Culture held at Howard University, Washington, D.C., October, 1977.

5. The work of Alex Willingham is the most consistent and noteworthy exception. See the following: "Ideology and Politics: Their Status in Afro-American Social Theory," *Endarch I* (Spring, 1975), pp. 4-25; "California Dreaming: Eldridge Cleaver's Epithet to the Activism of the Sixties," *Endarch I* (Winter, 1976), pp. 1-23.

6. Paul Piccone, "Beyond Critical Theory," mimeo, and "The Crisis of One-Dimensionality," *Telos* (Spring, 1978), pp. 43-54. See also Tim Luke, "Culture and Politics in the Age of Artificial Negativity," *ibid.*, pp. 55-72.

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waning of radical political activity is a result of the satisfaction of black aspirations. This satisfaction allegedly consists in: (1) extension of the social welfare apparatus; (2) elimination of legally sanctioned racial barriers to social mobility, which in turn has allowed for (3) expansion of possibilities open to blacks *within* the existing social system; all of which have precipated (4) a redefinition of "appropriate" black political strategy in line with these achievements.[7] This new strategy is grounded in a pluralist orientation that construes political issues solely in terms of competition for the redistribution of goods and services within the bounds of fixed system priorities. These four items constitute the "gains of the 1960s".[8] Intrinsic to this interpretation is the thesis that black political activity during the 1960s became radical because blacks had been excluded from society and politics and were therefore unable to effectively to solve group problems through the "normal" political process. Extraordinary actions were thus required to pave the way for regular participation.

This interpretation is not entirely untenable. With passage of the 1964 and 1965 legislation the program of the Civil Rights movement appeared to have been fulfilled. Soon, however, it became clear that the ideals of freedom and dignity had not been realized, and within a year, those ideals reasserted themselves in the demand for black power. A social program was elaborated, but again its underpinning ideals were not realized. The dilemma lay in translating abstract deals into concrete political goals, and it is here also that the "gains of the sixties" interpretation founders. It collapses ideals and appropriateness of the programs in question.

To be sure, racial segregation has been eliminated in the South, thus removing a tremendous oppression from black life. Yet, the dismantlement of the system of racial segregation only removed a fetter blocking the *possibility* of emancipation. In this context, computation of the "gains of the sixties" can begin only at the point where that extraordinary subjugation was eliminated. What, then, are those "gains" which followed the passage of civil rights legislation and how have they affected black life?

In 1967 black unemployment was over seven percent; for the first five months of 1978, it averaged over twelve percent.[9] Between 1969 and 1974 the proportion of the black population classified as "low income" has remained virtually the same.[10] Black median income did not improve significantly in

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7. See, for example: Thomas R. Brooks, *Walls come tumbling down: A History of the Civil Rights Movement, 1940-1970* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1974), pp. 290ff; Eddie N. Williams, *From Protest to Politics: The Legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr.* (Washington, D. C.).

8. This slogan has risen to prominence on the back of the black elite's voluble reaction to the Bakke case, which is said to portend reversal of those alleged "gains." One interpretation of these gains is found in Richard Freeman, "Black Economic Progress since 1964," *Public Interest* (Summer, 1978), pp. 52-68.

9. U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Employment and Earnings* XXV (1978); the National Commission for Manpower Policy, Special Report 9, *The Economic Position of Black Americans: 1976* (Washington, D.C., 1976), provides confirming trend data.

10. U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *The Social and Economic Status of the Black Population in the United States: 1974* (Washington, D.C., 1975), p. 42.

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relation to white family income in the decade after passage of civil rights legislation,[11] and between 1970 and 1974 black purchasing power actually declined.[12] Moreover, blacks are still far more likely to live in inadequate housing than whites, and black male life expectancy has declined, both absolutely and relative to whites, since 1959-61.[13]

Thus, the material conditions of the black population as a whole have not improved appreciably. Therefore, if the disappearance of black opposition is linked directly with the satisfaction of aspirations, the criteria of fulfillment cannot be drawn from the general level of material existence in the black community. The same can be said for categories such as "access to political decision-making." Although the number of blacks elected or appointed to public office has risen by leaps and bounds since the middle 1960s, that increase has not demonstrably improved life in the black community.

The problem is one of focus. The "gains of the sixties" thesis seems to hold only as long as the "black community" is seen as a monolithic social aggregation. Although black life *as a whole* has not improved considerably beyond the elimination of racial segregation, in the 1970s certain strata within the black community have actually benefited. This development is a direct outcome of the 1960s activism: of the interplay of the "movement" and the integrative logic of administrative capitalism. And this "gains of the sixties" interpretation cannot spell out what "satisfaction" is because it is itself the ideology of precisely those strata which have benefited from the events of the 1960s within the black community. These "leadership" strata tend to generalize their own interests since they see their legitimacy and integrity tied to a monolithic conceptualization of black life. Indeed, this conceptualization appeared in the unitarian mythology of late 1960s black nationalism. The representation of the black community as a collective subject neatly concealed the system of hierarchy which mediated the relation of the "leaders" and the "led".[14]

To analyze the genesis of this new elite is to analyze simultaneously the development of domination in American society in general. Consequently, the following will focus on sources of the pacification of the 1970s and will expose the limitations of any oppositionist activity which proceeds uncritically from models of mass-organization politics. This approach tends to capitulate to the predominant logic of domination.

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11. *Ibid.*, p. 25.
12. Barbara Jones, "Black Family Income: Patterns, Sources and Trends," unpublished paper presented at the annual meetings of the National Economic Association, American Economic Association, Atlantic City, New Jersey, September, 1976, p. 2.
13. Bureau of the Census, *Social and Economic Status,* pp. 123 and 137.
14. That the leadership elite projects its interests over the entire black population is neither unique or necessarily suggestive of insidious motives; however, it is just in the extent to which the elite's hegemony develops unconsciously that it is most important as a problem for emancipatory action. Cf. Gouldner's critique of intellectuals and intelligentsia; Alvin W. Gouldner, "Prologue to a Theory of Revolutionary Intellectuals," *Telos* (Winter, 1975-76), pp. 3-36 and *The Dialectic of Ideology and Technology: The Origins, Grammar and Future of Ideology* (New York, 1976), pp. 247-248 and *passim.*

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Black resistance to oppression hardly began in Montgomery, Alabama, in 1955. Yet, it was only then that opposition to racial subjugation assumed the form of a mass movement. Why was this so? Despite many allusions to the impact of "decolonization" in Africa, international experiences of blacks in World War II, and so on, the reasons why black activism exploded in the late 1950s have seldom been addressed systematically.[15] Although resistance before 1955 was undoubtedly reinforced by the anti-colonial movements abroad, what was significant for post-1955 growth of Civil Rights activity were those forces reshaping the entire American social order. An historically thorough perspective on the development of black opposition requires an understanding of the Cold War era in which it took shape.

Although popularly symbolized by "brinksmanship," "domino theory," fallout shelters and the atmosphere of terror characterized by McCarthy, HUAC and legions of meticulously anti-communist liberals, the Cold War was a much broader cultural phenomenon. Ultimately, it was a period of consolidation of the new mode of domination which had been developing for over two decades. Piccone has noted that the Cold War era was the culmination of a dynamic of political and cultural adjustment over the American economy by the 1920s.[16] On the political front, the New Deal re-defined the role of the state apparatus in terms of an aggressive, countercyclical intervention in the economy and everyday reality. At the same time, mass production required intensification of consumption. This requirement was met by the development and expansion of a consciously manipulative culture industry and by the proliferation of an ideology of consumerism through mass communications and entertainment media.[17]

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15. John Hope Franklin does not raise the question in his standard volume, *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of Negro Americans,* third edition (New York, 1969); nor surprisingly does Harold Cruse's *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual: From Its Origins to the Present* (New York, 1967) which is a seminal contribution to a reflexive theory of black political activity. That Cruse and Franklin fail to raise the question is perhaps because both — reflecting an aspect of the conventional wisdom — see an unbroken, if not cumulating, legacy of black activism in the twentieth century. Franklin sees the civil rights movement simply as the culmination of a century or more of protest. Cruse, in establishing the continuities of the poles of integrationism and nationalism, projects them back and forth from Douglass and Delaney to Black Power, glossing over significant historical differences in the process. In *The Making of Black Revolutionaries* (New York, 1972), James Forman is so consumed by the movement's manifest and organizational unfoldings that he is unable to subordinate it to history. His account of the 1950s focuses entirely on his personal awakening. Louis Lomax, *The Negro Revolt,* revised edition (New York, 1971); Lewis Killian, *The Impossible Revolution? Black Power and the American Dream* (New York, 1968); and the two period volumes by Lerone Bennett Jr., *The Negro Mood* (New York, 1964) and *Before the Mayflower: A History of the Negro in America, 1619-1964,* revised edition (Baltimore, 1969), all raise the question only to answer casually or to beg the question further. An all too common shortcoming, exemplified by each of the writers cited and extending throughout the study of black political activity, is a tendency to abstract black life from the currents of American history. The resulting scenarios of black existence suffer from superficiality.

16. "Crisis of One-Dimensionality," p. 45-46, "Beyond Critical Theory," p. 6.

17. John Alt observes that: "The problem of legitimating industrial reorganization was solved through a new social practice and ideology structured around the pursuit of money, material comfort, and a higher standard of living through consumerism. Mass consumption, as the necessary otherness of Tyalorized mass production, was itself offered as the ultimate justification for the rationalization of labor." "Beyond Class: The Decline of Industrial Labor

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Consumerism and the New Deal led to an intensification of Taylorization of labor, which homogenized American life according to the dictates of bureaucratic-insltrumental rationality. By the 1950s, Americanization had been institutionalized. Rigid political, intellectual and cultural conformism (Riesman's "other directedness") evidenced a social integration achieved through introjection and reproduction of the imperatives of the system of domination at the level of everyday life.[18]

Pressures toward homogenization exerted for decades at work, in schools and through the culture industry had eliminated any authentic cultural particularity among ethnic groups. What remained were residues of the lost cultures — empty mannerisms and ambivalent ethnic identities mobilizable for Democratic electoral politics.[19] Moreover, the pluralist model was already available for integrating the already depoliticized labor movement. In this context, the ruthless elimination of whatever opposition remained through the witch-hunts was only the *coup de grace* in a battle already won.

For various reasons, throughout this period, one region was bypassed in the monopolistic reorganization of American life and remained unintegrated into the new social order. At the end of World War II, the South remained the only internal frontier available for large-scale capital penetration. However,

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and Leisure," *Telos* (Summer, 1976), p. 71. Stuart Ewen identifies the Cold War period as the apotheosis of consumerism, whose enshrinement during those years was aided by the continued spread of popular journalism and the "mass marketing of television...(which) carried the consumer imagery into the back corners of home life." *Captains of Consciousness: Advertising and the Social Roots of the Consumer Culture* (New York, 1976), pp. 206-215.

18. Cf. David Riesman (with Nathan Glazer and Reuel Denney), *The Lonely Crowd: A Study of the Changing American Character,* abridged edition (New Haven, 1961), pp. 19-22 and Jules Henry's perceptive and telling study of the period, *Culture Against Man* (New York, 1963). Marcuse went so far as to suggest that even the concept of introjection may not capture the extent to which the one-dimensional order is reproduced in the individual on the ground that: "Introjection implies the existence of an inner dimension distinguished from and even antagonistic to the external exigencies — an individual consciousness and an individual unconscious *apart from* public opinion and behavior...(However, mass) production and mass distribution claim the *entire* individual...The manifold processes of introjection seem to be ossified in almost mechanical reactions. The result is, not adjustment but mimesis: an immediate identification of the individual with *his* society and, through it, with the society as a whole." *One-Dimensional Man,* p. 10.

19. The point is not that ethnicity has lost its power as a basis for self-identification or associational activity. What has been obliterated, however, is the distinctiveness of the institutional forms which were the source of group consciousness in the first place. Warner and Srole pridefully acknowledge the centrality of the prevailing order in the determination of ethnic consciousness: "The forces which are most potent both in forming and changing the ethnic groups emanate from the institutions of the dominant American social system." W. Lloyd Warner and Leo Srole, *The Social Systems of American Ethnic Groups* (New Haven, 1945), pp. 283-284. Stuart and Elizabeth Ewen, "Americanization and Consumption," *Telos* 37 (Fall, 1978), observe that the dynamic of homogenization began with integration into the system of wage labor which: "created great fissures and, ultimately, gaps in people's lives. Money...rendered much of the way in which non-industrial peoples understood themselves, and the reproduction of their daily lives, useless. The money system itself was a widely disseminated *mass medium* which ripped the structure of peoples' needs from their customary roots, and by necessity transplanted these needs in a soil nourished by the 'rationality' of corporate industry and the retail marketplace," (p. 47). Traditional ethnic ways of life hardly stood a chance under conditions in which the terms of survival were also those of massification! See also Maurice R. Stein, *The Eclipse of Community: An Interpretation ofAmerican Studies* (New York, 1960).

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even though the South could entice industry with a docile work force accustomed to low wages, full domestication of this region required certain basic adjustments.

For one thing, the caste-like organization of southern society seriously inhibited development of a rational labor supply. While much has been made of the utility of the segregated work force as a depressant of general wage levels, the maintenance of dual labor markets creates a barrier to labor recruitment.[20] As a pariah caste, blacks could not adequately become an industrial reserve army since they were kept out of certain jobs. Consequently, in periods of rapid expansion the suppressed black labor pool could not be fully used. Nor could blacks be mobilized as a potential strike-breaking force as readily as in other regions since employment of blacks in traditionally "white" jobs could trigger widespread disruptions.

The dual labor system was irreconcilable with the principle of reducing *all* labor to "abstract labor."[21] Scientific management has sought to reduce work processes to homogeneous and interchangeable hand and eye motions, eventually hoping to eliminate specialized labor.[22] A work force stratified on the basis of an economically irrational criterion such as race constitutes a serious impediment to realization of the ideal of a labor pool comprised of equivalent units. (Consider further the wastefulness of having to provide two sets of toilets in the plants!) In addition, the existing system of black subjugation, grounded in brutality, was intrinsically unstable. The racial order which demanded for its maintenance constant terror raised at every instant the possibility of rebellion and to that extent endangered "rational" administration. Given this state of affairs, the corporate elite's support for an anti-segregationist initiative makes sense.

The relation of the corporate liberal social agenda to Civil Rights protest is not a causal one. True, the Supreme Court had been chipping away at legal segregation for nearly 20 years, and the 1954 Brown decision finally provided the spark for intensified black protest. Yet, the eruption of resistance from southern blacks had its own roots. Hence, to claim that the Civil Rights movement was bourgeois conspiracy would be to succumb to the order's myth of its own omnipotence. Thus, the important question is not whether sectors

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20. See, for example: John V. Van Sickle, *Planning for the South: An Inquiry into the Economics of Regionalism* (Nashville, 1943), pp. 68-71; Gene Roberts, Jr., "The Waste of Negro Talent in a Southern State" in Alan F. Westin, ed., *Freedom Now: The Civil Rights Struggle in America* (New York, 1954).

21. Harry Braverman, *Labor and Monopoly Capital: The Degradation of Work in the 20th Century* (New York, 1974), notes the ironic circumstance that capital has appropriated as a conscious ideal Marx's "abstraction from the concrete forms of labor" (pp. 181-182). In the logic of monopoly capitalism — characterized in part by constant reduction of labor's share of the overall costs of production and increasing sensitivity for optimizing profits over time in a stable production environment, cf. Andreas Papandreou, *Paternalistic Capitalism* (Minneapolis, 1972), esp. pp. 80-89 — the short-term benefits likely to accrue from a dual labor market situation need not be expected to hold any great attractiveness.

22. Braverman, *Labor and Monopoly Capital*, p. 319 and *passim*. Also see David Noble, *America by Design: Science, Technology and the Rise of Corporate Capitalism* (New York, 1977), pp. 82 and 257-320.

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of the corporate elite orchestrated the Civil Rights movement, but instead what deficiencies within the Civil Rights movement were sufficiently compatible with the social agenda of corporate elites to prompt the latter to acquiesce to and encourage them. In order to answer this, it is necessary to identify both the social forces operative *within* the black community during segregation and those forces' engagement in Civil Rights activism. An analysis of the internal dynamic of the 1960s activism shows overlaps between the goals of the "New Deal offensive" and the objectives of the "movement" (and, by extension, the black community).[23]

For the purposes of this analysis, the most salient aspects of the black community in the segretated south lie within a management dimension. Externally, the black population was managed by means of codified subordination, reinforced by customary dehumanization and the omnipresent spectre of terror. The abominable details of this system are well known.[24] Furthermore, blacks were systematically excluded from formal participation in public life. By extracting tax revenues without returning public services or allowing blacks to participate in public policy formation, the local political system intensified the normal exploitation in the work place. Public administration of the black community was carried out by whites. The daily indignity of the apartheid-like social organization was both a product of this political-administrative disenfranchisement as well as a motor of its reproduction. Thus, the abstract ideal of freedom spawned within the Civil Rights movement addressed primarily this issue.

Despite the black population's alienation from public policy-making, an internal stratum existed which performed notable, but limited, social management functions. This elite stratum was comprised mainly of low-level state functionaries, merchants and "professionals" servicing black markets, and the clergy. While it failed to escape the general subordination, this indigenous elite usually succeeded by virtue of its comparatively secure living standard and informal relations with significant whites, in avoiding the extremes of racial oppression. The importance of this stratum was that it stabilized and coordinated the adjustment of the black population to social policy imperatives formulated outside the black community.

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23. A clarification is needed concerning use of the constructs "black community" and "black activism". Racial segregation and the movement against it were southern phenomena. Black Power "nationalism" was essentially a northern phenomenon for which legally sanctioned racial exclusion was not an immediate issue. Although the two historical currents of rebellion were closely related, they nevertheless were distinct. Consequently, they must be considered separately.

24. See, for example: Charles S. Johnson, *Patterns of Negro Segregation* (New York, 1943) and *Growing Up in the Black Belt* (Washington, D.C., 1941); C. Vann Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* (New York, 1966); Wilbur J. Cash, *The Mind of the South* (New York, 1941); Robert Penn Warren, *Segregation: The Inner Conflict in the South* (New York, 1956); John Dollard, *Caste and Class in a Southern Town* (New York, 1957); James W. Vander Zanden, *Race Relations in Transition* (New York, 1965); George B. Tindall, *The Emergence of the New South: 1913-1945* (Baton Rouge, 1967); Arthur Raper, *Preface to Peasantry: A Tale of Two Black Belt Countries* (Chapel Hill, 1936) and *The Tragedy of Lynching* (Chapel Hill, 1933); William L. Patterson, *We Charge Genocide* (New York, 1951); Martin Luther King, Jr., *Why We Can't Wait* (New York, 1964). The following discussion draws freely from these sources.

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Insofar as black public functionaries had assimilated bureaucratic rationality, the domination of fellow blacks was carried out in "doing one's job." For parts of the black elite such as the clergy, the ministerial practice of "easing community tensions" has always meant accommodation of black life to the existing forms of domination. Similarly, the independent merchants and professionals owed their relatively comfortable position within the black community to the special, captive markets created by segregation. Moreover, in the role of "responsible Negro spokesmen," this sector was able to elicit considerable *politesse*, if not solicitousness, from "enlightened" members of the white elite. Interracial "cooperation" on policy matters was thus smoothly accomplished, and the "public interest" seemed to be met simply because opposition to white ruling group initiatives had been effectively neutralized. The activating factor in this management relation was a notion of "Negro leadership" (later "black" or even "Black") that was generated outside the black community. A bitter observation made from time to time by the radical fringe of the movement was that the social category "leaders" seemed only to apply to the black community. No "white leaders" were assumed to represent a singular white population. But certain blacks were declared opinion-makers and carriers of the interests of an anonymous black population. These "leaders" legitimated their role through their ability to win occasional favors from powerful whites and through the status positions they already occupied in the black community.[25]

This mode of domination could not thoroughly pacify black life: only the transformation of the segregated order could begin to do that. Furthermore, the internal management strategy generated centrifugal pressures of its own. In addition to segregation, three other disruptive elements stand out within the black community in the 1950s. First, the United States' emergence from World War II as the major world power projected American culture onto an international scene. Thus, the anti-colonial movements that grew in Africa and Asia amid the crumbling of French and British colonial empires had a significant impact on black resistance in this country.[26] Secondly, the logic of one-dimensionality itself became a disruptive element. The homogenizing egalitarianism of the "New Deal" generated a sense of righteousness able to sustain a lengthy battle with Southern segregation. The challenge to racial domination was justified in terms of the "American Dream" and an ideal of freedom expressed in a demand for full citizenship.[27] Thus, the same forces

25. Certainly, the bizarre notion of black leadership was not an invention of the post-war era. That strategy of pacification had been the primary non-terroristic means for subduing black opposition since Booker T. Washington's network of alliances with corporate progressives and New South Bourbon Democrats. Moreover, the notion of a leadership stratum which was supposed to speak for a monolithic black community became the ideological model and political ideal for 1960s radicalism — especially in its "nationalist" variants.

26. King's fascination with Satyagraha suggests, although exaggeratedly, the influence which decolonization abroad had on the development of Civil Rights opposition. Cf. David L. Lewis, *King: A Critical Biography* (Baltimore, 1970), pp. 100-103 and King, "Letter from Birmingham Jail," in *Why We Can't Wait*, pp. 76-95.

27. Lomax, *The Negro Revolt*, p. 21 and *passim*; Martin Luther King, Jr., "I Have a

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that since the 1920s had sought to integrate the various immigrant populations also generated an American national consciousness among blacks. By the 1950s a sense of participation in a national society had taken root even in the South, fertilized by the mass culture industry (including black publications), schools and a defensive Cold War ideology. In the face of this growing national consciousness "separate but equal" existence was utterly intolerable to blacks. This is not to say that a perception rooted in the nation-state was universal among southern blacks in the 1950s, especially since the chief mechanisms of cultural adjustment such as television, popular films, compulsory schooling, etc., had not fully invaded the black community. Yet, mass culture and its corollary ideologies had extensively penetrated the private sphere of the black elite: the stratum from which systematic opposition arose.[28]

Thirdly, given the racial barrier, social mobility for the black elite was limited, relative to its white counterpart. Because of *de facto* proscription of black tenure in most professions, few possibilities existed for advancement. At the same time, the number of people seeking to become members of the elite had increased beyond what a segregated society could accommodate as a result of population growth and rising college attendance. In addition, upward mobility was being defined by the larger national culture in a way that further weakened the capability of the black elite to integrate its youth. Where ideology demanded nuclear physics and corporate management, black upward mobility rested with mortuary service and the Elks Lodge! The disjunction between ideals and possibilities delegitimized the elite's claim to brokerage and spokesmanship. With its role in question, the entrenched black elite was no longer able to effectively perform its internal management function and lost any authority with its "recruits" and the black community in general. As a result, a social space was cleared within which dissatisfaction with segregation could thrive as systematic opposition.

From this social management perspective, the sources of the "Freedom Movement" are identifiable within and on the periphery of its indigenous elite stratum. As soon as black opposition spilled beyond the boundaries of the black community, however, the internal management perspective became inadequate to understand further developments in the Civil Rights movement. When opposition to segregation became political rebellion, black protest required a response from white ruling elites. That response reflected the congruence of the interests of blacks and of corporate elites in reconstructing southern society and helped define the logic of all subsequent black

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Dream," in *Speeches by the Leaders: The March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom* (New York, n.d.); Whitney Young, *To Be Equal* (New York, 1964); and Samuel DuBois Cook, "The American Liberal Democratic Tradition, the Black Revolution and Martin Luther King, Jr.," in Hanes Walton, *The Political Philosophy of Martin Luther King, Jr.* (Westport, Conn., 1971), pp. xiii-xxxviii.

28. This does not mean that *Life* magazine and "Father Knows Best" taught blacks to "dream the dream of freedom." Rather, the integrative logic of massification exacerbated disruptive tendencies already present within the black elite.

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political activity. Both sets of interests shared an interest in rationalizing race relations in the South. The Civil Rights movement brought the two sets together.[29]

The alliance of corporate liberalism and black protest was evident in the aggressive endorsement of Civil Rights activity that was mobilized by the New Deal coalition. Major labor organizations and "enlightened" corporate sectors immediately climbed aboard the freedom train through the "progressive" wing of the Democratic party and private foundations. Moreover, it was through its coverage of black resistance in the South that television developed and refined its remarkable capabilities for creating public opinion by means of "objective" new reportage (a talent that reached its acme years later with the expulsion of Richard Nixon from the presidency). But television was not alone on the cultural front of the ideological struggle. *Life, Look, Saturday Evening Post*, major non-southern newspapers and other national publications featured an abundance of photo-essays that emphasized the degradation and brutalization of black life under Jim Crow.

Even popular cinema sought to thematize black life in line with civil rights consciousness in films such as *The Defiant Ones* (1958), *All the Young Men* (1960), *Raisin in the Sun* (1961), *Band of Angels* (1957), and the instructively titled *Nothing but a Man* (1964). Those and other films were marked by an effort to portray blacks with a measure of human depth and complexity previously absent from Hollywood productions. By 1957 even the great taboo of miscegenation could be portrayed on the screen in *Island in the Sun*, and a decade later the cultural campaign had been so successful that this theme could be explored in the parlor rather than in back streets and resolved with a happy ending in *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*. It is interesting that Dorothy Dandridge became the first black in a leading role to be nominated for an academy award for her role in *Carmen* in 1954 — the year of the Brown decision — and that the most productive periods of civil rights activism and Sidney Poitier's film career coincided. Poitier's lead performance in the maudlin *Lilies of the Field* won an Oscar for him in 1963, on the eve of the passage of the Public Accommodations Act! Thus endorsed by the culture industry (which affronted White Supremacy in the late 1950s by broadcasting a Perry Como show in which comedienne Molly Goldberg kissed black ballplayer Ernie Banks) the Civil Rights movement was virtually assured success.

While the Civil Rights coalition was made possible by the compatibility of the allies' interests in reorganizing the South, its success was facilitated by the ideals and ideologies generated in the protest. Even though there had been

29. Concepts such as duplicity and cooptation are inadequate to shed light on why corporate and liberal interests actively supported the Civil Rights movement. Interpretations so derived cannot fully explain programs and strategies which originated in the black community. They suggest that naive and trusting blacks, committed to an ideal of global emancipation, allowed themselves to be led away from this ideal by bourgeois wolves in sheep's clothing. This kind of "false consciousness" thesis is theoretically unacceptable. Consciousness is false not when it is a lie forced from outside but when it does not comprehend its historical one-sidedness.

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ties between black southern elites and corporate-liberal elements for a long time, if the civil rights program had raised fundamental questions regarding social structure, the corporate-elite response may have been suppression rather than support — especially given the Cold War context. Instead, from the very beginning the American establishment outside of Dixie supported the abolition of segregation.[30] At any rate, it is clear that the civil rights ideology fit very well with the goals of monopoly capitalism. The Civil Rights movement appealed to egalitarianism and social rationality. On both counts segregation was found wanting while leaving non-racial features of the social order unquestioned.

The egalitarian argument was both moral as well as constitutional. The moral argument was in the bourgeois tradition from the Reformation to the French Revolution. It claimed equal rights for all human beings as well as entitlement to equal life chances. This abstract and ahistorical moral imperative did not grasp social relations beyond their phenomenal forms and therefore could only denounce racial exclusion as an evil anomaly. The predominant form of social organization was uncritically accepted and the moral imperative was predictably construed in terms of American constitutional law. Equality before the law and equality of opportunity to participate in all areas of citizenship were projected as needed extension to blacks in the backward South to fulfill the promise of democracy.

Coexisting with this egalitarian ideology was the Civil Rights movement's appeal to a functionalist conception of social rationality. To the extent that it blocked individual aspirations, segregation was seen as restricting artificially social growth and progress. Similarly, by raising artificial barriers such as the construction of blacks' consumer power through Jim Crow legislation and, indirectly, through low black wages, segregation impeded, so the argument went, the free functioning of the market. Consequently, segregation was seen not only as detrimental to the blacks who suffered under it, but also to economic progress as such. Needless to say, the two lines of argument were met with approval by corporate liberals.[31]

It is apparent now that the egalitarian ideology coincided with corporate-liberalism's cultural program of homogenization. Civil Rights' egalitarianism demanded that any one unit of labor be equivalent to any other, that one citizen-consumer be considered equivalent to another, and that the Negro be

30. Of course, suppression was the reaction of certain elements, most notably within the state apparatus whose bureaucratized priorities urged suppression of any disruptive presence in the society. Howard Zinn, *SNCC: The New Abolitionists* (Boston, 1965), as well as Forman and Sellers, shows that the federal apparatus, which later developed a reputation at the "grass roots" as the patron saint of equality, was at best lukewarm in response to black demands for enforcement of constitutional rights and often set out to suppress tendencies and distinct personalities in the movement. Nevertheless, the movement was not suppressed, and not because it "forced" its will upon history. That bit of romantic back-slapping has as little credence as the one that contends that the anti-war movement ended the Vietnam War. The state hardly was mobilized against the Civil Rights activism; the Supreme Court had authorized its legitimacy before it even began.

31. John F. Kennedy picked up the line and ran it as if it were his own; see his "Message to Congress," *Congressional Record* 88th Congress, 1st Session, Feb. 28, 1963.

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thought of as "any other American." There is more than a little irony that the Civil Rights movement demanded for blacks the same "eradication of otherness" that had been forced upon immigrant populations. The demand hardly went unheard; through the blanket concept "integration" and the alliance with a corporate elite that was all too ready to help clarify issues and refine strategies and objectives, the abstract ideals of Civil Rights activism were concretized in the corporate elite's plan for pacification and reorganization.

The elimination of segregation in the South destroyed the specificity of both the South as a region and blacks as a group, and the rationality in whose name the movement had appealed paved the way for reconstruction of new modes of domination of black life. The movement had begun as a result of the frustrations of the black elite, and it ended with the achievement of autonomy and mobility among those elements. Public Accommodations and Voting Rights legislation officially defined new terms for the management of blacks and an expanded managerial role for the elite.

Although the Civil Rights movement did have a radical faction, this wing failed to develop a systematic critique of civil rights ideology or the alliance with corporate liberalism. Moreover, the radicals — mainly within SNCC — never repudiated the leadership ideology which reinforced the movement's character as an elite brokerage relation with powerful whites outside the South. Thus, the radicals helped isolate their own position by acquiescing to a conception of the black community as a passive recipient of political symbols and directives. When the dust settled, the black "mainstream" elements and their corporate allies — who together monopolized the symbols of legitimacy — proclaimed that freedom had been achieved, and the handful of radicals could only feel uneasy that voting rights and "social equality" were somehow insufficient.[32]

Outside the South, rebellion arose from different conditions. Racial segregation was not rigidly codified and the management sub-systems in the black community were correspondingly more fluidly integrated within the local administrative apparatus. Yet, structural, generational and ideological pressures, broadly similar to those in the South, existed within the black elite in the Northern, Western, and Midwestern cities that had gained large black populations in the first half of the 20th century. In non-segregated urban contexts, formal political participation and democratized consumption had long since been achieved: there the salient political issue was the extension of the administrative purview of the elite within the black community. The centrality of the administrative nexus in the "revolt of the cities" is evident from the ideological programs it generated.

32. It was out of this milieu of muddled uneasiness that Rev. Willie Ricks gave the world the slogan, "Black Power!" on the Meridith march in 1966. A flavor of the frustration of the radicals at the time can be gotten from Julius Lester, *Look Out, Whitey! Black Power's Gon' Get Your Mama* (New York 1968). In some respects Lester's account, though more dated, has greater value for understanding this period than either Forman's or Sellers' because *Look Out, Whitey!* is written from within Black Power, rather than retrospectively from the vantage point of new ideologies and old involvements that need to be protected. Also, Stokely Carmichael, "Who Is Qualified?" in *Stokely Speaks: Black Power Back to Pan-Africanism* (New York, 1961).

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Black Power came about as a call for indigenous control of economic and political institutions in the black community.[33] Because one of the early slogans of Black Power was a vague demand for "community control," the emancipatory character of the rebellion was open to considerable misinterpretation. Moreover, the diversity and "militance" of its rhetoric encouraged extravagance in assessing the movement's depth. It soon became clear, however, that "community control" called not for direction of pertinent institutions — schools, hospitals, police, retail businesses, etc. — by their black constituents, but for administration of those institutions by alleged representatives *in the name of* a black community. Given an existing elite structure whose legitimacy had already been certified by federal social-welfare agencies, the selection of "appropriate" representatives was predictable. Indeed, as Robert Allen has shown,[34] the empowerment of this elite was actively assisted by corporate-state elements. Thus, "black liberation" quickly turned into black "equity," "community control" became simply "black control" and the Nixon "blackonomics" strategy was readily able to "coopt" the most rebellious tendency of 1960s black activism. Ironically, Black Power's supersession of the Civil Rights program led to further consolidation of the management elite's hegemony within the black community. The black elite broadened its administrative control by uncritically assuming the legitimacy of the social context within which that elite operated. Black control was by no means equivalent to democratization.

This state of affairs remained unclear even to Black Power's radical fringe. Such a failure of political perception cannot be written off as crass opportunism or as underdeveloped consciousness. Though not altogether false, explanations of this kind only beg the question. Indeed, Black Power radicalism, which absorbed most of the floundering left wing of the Civil Rights movement and generated subsequent "nationalist" tendencies, actually blurred the roots of the new wave of rebellion. As Civil Rights activism exhausted itself and as spontaneous uprisings proliferated among urban blacks, the Civil Rights radicals sought to generate an ideology able to unify and politicize these uprisings. This effort, however, was based on two mystifications that implicitly rationalized the elite's control of the movement.

First, Black Power presupposed a mass-organizational model built on the assumption of a homogeneity of black political interests to be dealt with through community leadership. It is this notion of "black community" that has blocked development of a radical critique in the Civil Rights movement by contraposing an undifferentiated mass to a leadership stratum representing it. This understanding ruled out any analysis of cleavages or

33. See, for example, Carmichael, "Power and Racism" in *Stokely Speaks*. This essay is perhaps the first attempt to articulate a systematic concept of the notion Black Power.

34. *Black Awakening in Capitalist America: An Analytic History* (Garden City, 1969), pp. 129-192. Allen's interpretation, however, cannot move beyond this descriptive point because he accepts a simplistic notion of cooptation to explain the black corporate elite nexus. Julius Lester, charged by 1968 that the "principal beneficiaries of Black Power have been the black middle class." *Revolutionary Notes* (New York, 1969), p. 106.

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particularities within the black population: "community control" and "black control" became synonymous. The implications of this ideology have already been discussed: having internalized the predominant elite-pluralist model of organization of black life, the radical wing could not develop any critical perspective. Internal critique could not go beyond banal symbols of "blackness," and thus ended up by stimulating demand for a new array of "revolutionary" consumer goods. Notwithstanding all its bombast, Black Power construed racial politics within the ideological universe through which the containment of the black population was mediated.

Acceptance of this model not only prevented Black Power from transcending the social program of the indigenous administrative elite, but it also indicated the extent to which, as Cruse was aware at the time,[35] Black Power radicalism was itself a frantic statement of the elite's agenda — hence the radicals' chronic ambivalence over "black bourgeoisie," capitalism, socialism and "black unity." Their mystification of the social structure of the black community was largely the result of a failure to come to terms with their own privileged relation to the corporate elite's program of social reconstruction. This state of affairs precipitated a still more profound mystification that illuminates the other side of Black Power rebellion: the reaction against massification.

The Civil Rights movement's demand for integration was superfluous outside the South, and Black Power was as much a reaction against integrationist ideology as against racial domination. Thus, while militant black nationalism developed as a reaction to the assimilationist approach of the Civil Rights movement, it simultaneously envisioned an obsolete model of black life. This yearning was hypostatized to the level of a "black culture" — a romantic retrieval of a vanishing black particularity. This vision of black culture, of course, was grounded in residual features of black rural life prior to migrations to the North. They were primarily cultural patterns that had once been enmeshed in a lifeworld knitted together by kinship, voluntary association and production within a historical context of rural racial domination. As that lifeworld disintegrated before urbanization and mass culture, black nationalism sought to reconstitute it.[36]

In that sense, the nationalist elaboration of Black Power was naive both in that it was not sufficiently self-conscious and in that it mistook artifacts and idiosyncrasies of culture for its totality and froze them into an a-historical theory of authenticity. Two consequences followed. First, abstracted from its

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35. Harold Cruse, *Crisis*, pp. 544-565.

36. Jennifer Jordan notes this "nostalgic" character of 1960s culturalism and its grounding in the black elite in an essay, "Cultural Nationalism in the Sixties: Politics and Poetry," forthcoming in Barnette and Reed, eds., *The Circles in the Spiral*. In the most systematic and thorough critical reconstruction of black cultural nationalism to date, Jordan identifies two core nationalist tendencies: one Afro-American preservationist, the other African retrievalist. Presumably, Ron Karenga is to be seen as a bridge between those tendencies with his commitment to "creation, recreation and circulation of Afro-American culture." "From the Quotable Karenga," in Floyd Barbour, ed., *The Black Power Revolt* (Boston, 1968), p. 162.

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concrete historical context, black culture lost its dynamism and took on the commodity form (e.g., red, black and green flags, dashikis, Afro-Sheen, "blaxploitation" films, collections of bad poetry, etc.). Secondly, while ostensibly politicizing culture by defining it as an arena for conflict, black nationalism actually depoliticized the movement inasmuch as the reified nationalist framework could relate to the present only through a simplistic politics of unity.[37] Hence, it forfeited hegemony over political programs to the best organized element in the black community: the administrative elite. In this fashion, black culture became a means of legitimation of the elite's political hegemony.

Black culture posited a functionalist, perfectly integrated black social order which was then projected backward through history as the *Truth* of black existence. The "natural" condition of harmony was said to have been disrupted only when divisiveness and conflict were introduced by alien forces. This myth delegitimated internal conflicts and hindered critical dialogue within the black community. Correspondingly, the intellectual climate which came to pervade within the "movement" was best summarized in the nationalists' exhortation to "think black," a latter-day version of "thinking with one's blood." Thus was the circle completed: the original abstract rationalism that had ignored existing social relations of domination for a mythical, unitarian social ideal had turned into a militant and self-justifying irrationalism. Truth became a function of the speaker's "blackness," i.e., validity claims were to be resolved not through discourse but by the claimant's manipulation of certain banal symbols of legitimacy. The resultant situation greatly favored the well-organized and highly visible elite.

The nationalist program functioned also as a mobilization myth. In defining a collective consciousness, the idealization of folkishness was simultaneously an exhortation to collectivized practice. The folk, in its Afro-American manifestation as well as elsewhere, was an ideological category of mass-organizational politics. The community was to be created and mobilized as a passively homogeneous mass, activated by a leadership elite.

While the politicized notion of black culture was a negative response to the estrangement and anomie experienced in the urban North, as a "solution" it only *affirmed the negation* of genuine black particularity.[38] The prescription

37. Cf. Imamu Amiri Baraka (Leroi Jones), "Toward the Creation of Political Institutions for All African Peoples," *Black World* XXI (October 1972), pp. 54-78. "Unity will be the only method, it is part of the black value system because it is only with unity that we will get political power." Baraka, *Raise, Race, Rays, Raze* (New York, 1971), p. 109.

38. The fascination shared by most of the nationalists with the prospects of consciously creating a culture revealed both the loss of genuine cultural base *and* the extent of the nationalists' acceptance of manipulation as a strategy (cf. Karenga's "seven criteria for culture," *Black Power Revolt*, p. 166). The farther away the nationalists chose to go to find their cultural referent, the more clearly they demonstrated the passage of a self-driving, spontaneous black existence from the arena of American history. The ultimate extension of escapism came with the growth of Pan-Africanism as an ideology; that turn — at least in its most aggressive manifestations — conceded as a first step the inauthenticity of *all* black American life. See: Carmichael, *Stokely Speaks*, pp. 175-227; Ideological Research Staff of Malcolm X Liberation

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of cohesion in the form of a mass leadership relation betrayed the movement's tacit acceptance of the agenda of the black management stratum. The negatively immanent in the cultural myth soon gave way to an opportunistic appeal to unity grounded on an unspecifiable "blackness" and a commodified idea of "soul." Black unity, elevated to an end in itself, became an ideology promoting consolidation of the management elite's expanded power over the black population. In practice, unity meant collective acceptance of a set of demands to be lobbied by a leadership elite before the corporate-state apparatus. To that extent, "radical" Black Power reproduced on a more elaborate ideological basis the old pluralist brokerage politics. Similarly, this phony unity restricted possibilities for development of a black public sphere.

To be sure, the movement stimulated widespread and lively political debate in the black community. Although it hardly approached an "ideal speech situation," various individuals and constituencies were drawn into political discourse on a considerably more democratized basis than had previously been the case. Yet, the rise of unitarian ideology, coupled with a mystified notion of "expertise," effectively reintroduced hierarchy within the newly expanded political arena.[39] At any rate, "grass roots" politics in the black community can be summarized as follows: the internal management elite claimed primacy in political discourse on the basis of its ability to project and realize a social program, and then mobilized the unitarian ideal to de-legitimize any divergent positions. On the other hand, the "revolutionary" opposition offered no alternative; within its ranks the ideology of expertise was never repudiated. The radicals had merely replaced the elite's pragmatism with a mandarin version of expertise founded on mastery of the holy texts of Kawaida, Nkrumanism or "scientific socialism." By the time of the 1971 National Black Political Convention in Gary, the mainstream elite strata were well on the way to becoming the sole effective voice in the black community. By the next convention in 1974 in Little Rock — after the election of a second wave of black officials — their hegemony was total.[40]

By now the reasons for the demise of black opposition in the U.S. should be clear. The opposition's sources were formulated in terms of the predominant ideology and thereby formulated in terms of the predominant ideology and thereby readily integrated as an affirmation of the reality of the system as a whole. The movement "failed" because it "succeeded," and its success can be

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University, *Understanding the African Struggle* (Greensboro, N.C., 1971), Owusu Sadaukai (Howard Fuller), *The Condition of Black People in the 1970s* (Chicago, 1972).

39. In this regard expertise translates into superficial articulateness and ability to negotiate with the social management apparatus.

40. Ronald Walters was able to gloat after Little Rock that the black elected officials had become the vanguard political force in the black community. "The Black Politician: Fulfilling the Legacy of Black Power," unpublished. Baraka, its former chairman and a central organizer, was very nearly expelled from the National Black Assembly in 1975 by a force of elected officials put off by his new-found "Marxism." Note, however, that even he had to admit the activists' marginality and weakness compared to the mainstream elite as early as 1970 at the Congress of African Peoples. Baraka, ed., *African Congress: A Documentary of the First Modern Pan-African Congress* (New York, 1972), p. 99.

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measured by its impact on the administration of the social system. The protest against racial discrimination in employment and education was answered by the middle 1970s by state-sponsored democratization of access to management and other "professional" occupations. Clear, quantifiable racial discrimination remained a pressing public issue only for those whose livelihood depended on finding continuous instances of racial discrimination.[41] Still, equalization of access should not be interpreted simply as a concession: it also rationalized recruitment of intermediate management personnel. In one sense the affirmative action effort can be viewed as a publicly subsidized state and corporate talent search.

Similarly, the protest against external administration of black life was met by an expansion in the scope of the black political-administrative apparatus. Through federal funding requirements of community representation, reapportionment of electoral jurisdictions, support for voter "education" and growth of the social welfare bureaucracy, the black elite was provided with broadened occupational opportunities and with offical responsibility for administration of the black population. The rise of black officialdom in the latter 1970s signals the realization of the reconstructed elite's social program and the consolidation of its hegemony over black life. No longer do preachers, funeral directors and occasional politicos vie for the right to rationalize an externally generated agenda to the black community. Now, black officials and professional political activists represent, interact among, and legitimate themselves before an attentive public of black functionaries in public and

41. This is not to say that blacks no longer are oppressed, nor that that oppression no longer has racial characteristics. Nor still is it possible to agree with Wilson's simplistic claim that race is receding as a factor in the organization of American society; as Harold Barnette notes, the integration of affirmative action programs into the social management apparatus suggests race's continuing significance. See William Julius Wilson, *The Declining Significance of Race: Blacks and Changing American Institutions* (Chicago, 1978) and Barnette's review in *Southern Exposure* VII (Spring, 1979), pp. 121-122. With legitimation and absorption of anti-racism by the social management system, race has assumed a more substantial and pervasive function than ever before in American life. Moreover, this function is often life-sustaining; controlling discrimination has become a career specialty — complete with "professional," "paraprofessional," and "sub-professional" gradations — in public and private bureaucracies. However, "racial discrimination" fails as a basis from which to interpret or address black oppression.

"Racism" is bound to an "equality of opportunity" ideology which can express only the interests of the elite strata among the black population; equality of access to the meaningless, fragmented and degrading jobs which comprise the bulk of work, for example, hardly is the stuff of "black liberation" and is ultimately a retrograde social demand. It is not an accident, therefore, that the only major battle produced by the struggle against racism in the 1970s has been the anti-Bakke movement, whose sole objective was protection of blacks' access to pursuit of professional employment status.

Racism makes its appearance as an opaque reification grafted onto otherwise acceptable institutions. Small wonder it is the only issue the black elite can find to contend! Not only does racism carry the elite's sole critique of U.S. society, but the claim that racism creates a bond of equivalent victimization among blacks is one of the sources of the elite's legitimation. It is interesting to recall in this context that "racism" became the orthodox explanation of black oppression when the Kerner Commission annointed it as the fundamental source of the 1964-1967 urban uprisings. *Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders* (New York, 1968), p. 203. This document goes far toward articulating the outlines of what became the new strategy for management of the black population.

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private sectors of the social management apparatus.[42] Even the ideological reproduction of the elite is assured: not only mass-market journalists, but black academicians as well (through black "scholarly" publications, research institutes and professional organizations) almost invariably sing the praises of the newly empowered elite.[43]

It was in the ideological sphere as well that the third major protest, that against massification of the black community, was resolved. Although authentic Afro-American particularity had been undermined by the standardizing imperatives of mass capitalism, the black nationalist reaction paved the way for the constitution of an artificial particularity.[44] Residual idiomatic and physical traits, bereft of any distinctive content, were injected with racial stereotypes and the ordinary petit bourgeois *Weltanschauung* to create the pretext for an apparently unique black existence. A thoroughly ideological construction of black uniqueness — which was projected universally in the mass market as black culture — fulfilled at least three major functions. First, as a marketing device it facilitated the huckstering of innumerable commodities designed to enhance, embellish, or glorify "blackness".[45] Second, artificial black particularity provided the basis for the myth of genuine black community and consequently legitimated the organization of the black population into an administrative unit — and, therefore, the black elite's claims to primacy. Finally, the otherness-without-negativity provided by the ideologized blackness can be seen as a potential antidote to the new contradictions generated by monopoly capitalism's bureaucratic rationality. By constituting an independently given sector of society responsive to administrative controls, the well-managed but

42. The most significant shift in the occupational structure of the black population in the decade after the 1964 Civil Rights Act was relative expansion of its elite component. Between 1964 and 1974 the percentage of minority males classified as "professional and technical" workers increased by half; the percentage classified as non-farm, salaried "managers and administrators" quadrupled over that period. Similar increases were realized by minority females. *Social and Economic Status of the Black Population*, pp. 73-74.

43. The celebration of the new elite is not, as once was the case, restricted to black media. Stephen Birmingham has testified to their presence and allowed them to expose their personal habits in his characteristically gossipy style of pop journalism in his *Certain People: America's Black Elite* (Boston, 1977). The *New York Times Sunday Magazine* twice at least has lionized the beautiful black stratum of the 1970s. See Peter Ross Range, "Making It in Atlanta: Capital of 'Black is Bountiful'," *New York Times Sunday Magazine*, April 7, 1974, and William Brashler, "The Black Middle Class: Making It," in the Dec. 3, 1978, magazine. Each of these brassy accounts tends, despite occasional injections of "balance," to accept and project the elite's mystical view of itself and exaggerates its breadth and force in society. However, that the *Times* even would care to make the statement made by these two articles suggests minimally that the elite has been integrated into the corporate marketing strategy on an equal basis.

44. The distinction of "authentic" and "artificial" particularity is similar to Habermas' distinction of "living" and "objectivistically prepared and strategically employed" cultural traditions. A cultural particularity is "authentic" in so far as it: (1) reproduces itself within the institutional environment that apparently delimits the groups, i.e., outside the social administrative system; and (2) *is not* mobilized by the mass culture industry. Cf. Jürgen Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis* (Boston, 1975), pp. 70-72.

45. Jordan even contends that radical culturalism was most susceptible among all the 1960s oppositional forms to the logic of commodification because of its tendency to reduce identity to the artifact. Cf. "Cultural Nationalism in the Sixties."

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recalcitrant black community justifies the existence of the administrative apparatus and legitimates existing forms of social integration.

In one sense, the decade and a half of black activism was a phenomenon vastly more significant than black activists appreciated while in another sense it was far less significant than has been claimed.[46] As an emancipatory project for the Afro-American population, the "movement" — especially after the abolishment of segregation — had little impact beyond strengthening the existing elite strata. Yet, as part of a program of advanced capitalist reconstruction, black activism contributed to thawing the Cold War and outlined a model to replace it.

By the latter 1960s the New Deal coalition had become obsolete and it was no longer able to fully integrate recalcitrant social strata such as the black population.[47] The New Deal coalition initiated the process of social homogenization and depoliticization Marcuse described as one dimensionality. As Piccone observes, however, by the 1960s the transition to monopoly capitalism had been fully carried out and the whole strategy had become counterproductive.[48] The drive toward homogenization and the total domination of the commodity form had deprived the system of the "otherness" required both to restrain the irrational tendencies of bureaucratic rationality and to locate lingering and potentially disruptive elements. Notwithstanding their vast differences, the ethnic "liberation struggles" and counterculture activism on the one side and the "hard hat" reaction on the other, were two sides of the same rejection of homogenization. Not only did these various positions challenge the one-dimensional order, but their very existence betrayed the inability of the toally administered society to pacify social existence while at the same time remaining sufficiently dynamic.

The development of black activism from spontaneous protest through mass mobilization to system support indicated the arrival of a new era of domination based on domesticating negativity by organizing spaces in which it could be legitimately expressed. Rather than suppressing opposition, the social system now creates its own. The proliferation of government generated reference groups in addition to ethnic ones (the old, the young, battered wives, the handicapped, veterans, retarded and gifted children, etc.)[49] and

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46. Compare for example: S.E. Anderson, "Black Students: Racial Consciousness and the Class Struggle, 1960-1976," *Black Scholar* VIII(January-February 1977), pp. 35-43; Muhammad Ahmad, "On the Black Student Movement — 1960-1970," *Black Scholar* IX (May-June 1978), pp. 2-11; James and Grace Lee Boggs, *Revolution and Evolution in the Twentieth Century* (New York, 1974), pp. 174ff.

47. The coalition's bankruptcy was demonstrated by the defections from its electoral constituency to Nixon's "silent majority" in 1968 and wholesale collapse in the face of McGovernite and Republican challenges in 1972. Unable to end the Vietnam War and adjust to a new era of imperialism or to address the concerns of such post-scarcity era advocacy centers as the student and ecology movements, the productivist liberal-labor forces who had controlled the Democratic party for a generation also found it impossible to establish a common discursive arena with the ethnic and feminist consciousness movements of the 1960s.

48. "Crisis of One-Dimensionality," p. 46; "The Changing Function of Critical Theory," *New German Critique* (Fall 1977), pp. 35-36.

49. Habermas calls these "quasi-groups" and maintains that they perform the additional

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the appearance of legions of "watchdog" agencies, reveal the extent to which the system manufactures and markets its own illusory opposition.

What makes the "age of artificial negativity" possible is the overwhelming success of the process of massification undertaken since the Depression and in response to it. Universal fragmentation of consciousness, with the corollary decline in the ability to think critically and the regimentation of an alienated everyday life[50] set the stage for new forms of domination built in the very texture of organization. In mass society, organized activity on a large scale requires hierarchization. Along with hierarchy, however, the social management logic also comes into being to (1) protect existing privileges by delivering realizable, if inconsequential, payoffs and (2) to legitimate the administrative rationality as a valid and efficient model. To the extent that the organization strives to ground itself on the *mass* it is already integrated into the system of domination. The shibboleths whch comprise its specific platform make little difference. What is important is that the organization reproduces the manipulative hierarchy and values typical of contemporary capitalism.

Equally important for the existence of this social-managerial form is that the traditional modes of opposition to capitalism have not been able to successfully negotiate the transition from entrepreneurial to administrative capitalism. Thus, the left has not fully grasped the recent shifts in the structure of domination and continues to organize resistance along the very lines which reinforce the existing social order. As a consequence, the opposition finds itself perpetually outflanked. Unable to deliver the goods — political or otherwise — the left collapses before the cretinization of its own constituency. Once the mass model is accepted, cretinization soon follows and from that point the opposition loses any genuine negativity. The Civil Rights and Black Power movements prefigured the coming of this new age; the feminist photocopy of the black road to nowhere was its farcical re-run.

The role of the mass culture industry in this context is to maintain and reproduce the new synthesis of domination. Here, again, the history of the "black revolution" is instructive. In its most radical stage Black Power lived and spread as a media event. Stokely Carmichael and Rap Brown entertained nightly on network news, and after ordinary black "militancy" had lost its dramatic appeal, the Black Panther Party added props and uniforms to make radical politics entirely a show business proposition. Although late 1960s black radicalism offered perhaps the most flamboyant examples of the peculiar relation of the mass media to the would-be opposition, that was only an extreme expression of a pattern at work since the early days of the Civil Rights movement. Since then, political opposition has sought to

function of absorbing the "secondary effects of the averted economic crisis," *Legitimation Crisis*, p. 39.

50. Russell Jacoby, "A Falling Rate of Intelligence?" *Telos* (Spring 1976), pp. 141-146; Stanley Aronowitz, "Mass Culture and the Eclipse of Reason: The Implications for Pedagogy," *College English* 38 (April 1977), pp. 768-774 and *False Promises: The Shaping of American Working Class Consciousness* (New York, 1973).

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propagandize its efforts through the mass media. Given the prevailing cretinization and the role of the culture industry in reproducing the fragmented, commodified consciousness, such a strategy, if pursued uncritically, could only reinforce the current modes of domination.[51]

That all forms of political opposition accepted the manipulative, mass-organization model gave the strategy a natural, uncomplicated appearance and prevented the development of a critical approach. The consequence was a propagation of a model of politics which reinforced over-simplification, the reduction of ideals to banalized objects of immediate consumption — i.e. the commodity-form — and to an alienated, dehumanized hero cultishness with the "revolutionary" replacing either hero or villain. In short, opposition increasingly becomes a spectacle in a society organized around reduction of all existence to a series of spectacles.[52]

So monopoly capitalism has entered a new stage typified by the extension of the administrative apparatus throughout everyday life. In this context, genuine opposition is checkmated *a priori* by the legitimation and projection of a partial, fragmented criticism which can be readily made functional in further streamlining the predominant rationality. And in cases where existing bureaucratic structures need control mechanisms to prevent excesses, diffused uneasiness with predominant institutions ends up artificially channelled into forms of negativity able to fulfill the needed internal control function. Always a problem for opposition which seeks to sustain itself over time, under the new conditions of administered negativity, this one step backward required by organized opposition's need to broaden its constituency and conduct "positional warfare," becomes a one-way slide to affirmation of the social order. The logic of the transition to new forms of bourgeois hegemony requires adjustment of administrative rationality. The unrestrained drive to total integration now is mediated by peripheral, yet systematically controlled, loci of criticism; one-dimensionality itself has been "humanized" by the cultivation of commodified facsimiles of diversity.

An important question remains: what of the possibilities for genuine opposition? The picture that has been painted seems excessively pessimistic.

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51. Julius Lester was one who saw the prominence of a media cult in the movement. *Revolutionary Notes*, pp. 176-180. On the peculiar style of the Panthers see Earl Anthony, *Picking Up the Gun* (New York, 1970).

52. "The spectacle presents itself as an enormous unalterable and inaccessible actuality. It says nothing more than 'that which appears is good, that which is good appears.' The attitude which it demands in principle is this passive acceptance, which in fact it has already obtained by its manner of appearing without reply, by its monopoly of appearance." Par. 12, Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle* (Detroit, 1970).

53. A recent incident captures contemporary life: during the national telecast of the 1978 Miss Black America pageant, General Motors, a sponsor of the broadcast, featured a commercial in which a utility-man at a plant listed the attractions of his job. Among them were pay, fringe benefits, security, opportunity to perform various tasks (a function solely of his particular position), congenial supervision and a good union! In the metaphor of a colleague who is one of a vanishing breed of baseball fans, the bourgeoisie has a shut-out going with two away in the bottom of the ninth!

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Yet, this should not be understood to mean that opposition is futile. It *is* necessary, though, to closely examine the customary modes of opposition. The theory of artificial negativity historicizes the critique of the post-Cold War left and suggests at the same time some broad outlines for a for a reconceptualization of emancipatory strategy.

This examination of black radicalism in the wake of its integration offers a microcosmic view of the plight of the left as a whole. Having accepted an organizational model based on massification, the radicals were forced to compete with the elite on the latter's terms — an impossible proposition since the elite had access to the cultural apparatus designed for mass mobilization. Moreover, even when opposition tried to reconstruct itself, it failed to generate systematic critique of its own strategy and was therefore unable to come to terms with shifts in the structure of capitalist social relations. Instead, it remained caught within a theoretical structure adequate only for an earlier, pre-administrative stage of capitalist development. Thus, the failure of mysticized black nationalism is reproduced in today's "ideological struggles" which reached their nadir in the 1978 dispute over whether Mao Tse-tung was really dead!

Still, what of possibilities? Certain implication follow from the previous analysis. It points in the direction of attempts to cultivate areas of unorganizable free space in the interstices of the social system and to reduce the scope of appropriate political intervention from mass organization to the reconstitution of individuality. Clearly, this sketch provides no blueprint. In fact, it does not point to any really "concrete" direction. Yet, charges of pessimism are unwarranted. Hope must seek its possibilities in the darkest moments of the present; it is despair which hides its head from history and refuses to see the undesirable.[54]

54. "The main thing is that utopian conscience and knowledge, through the pain it suffers in facts, grows wise, yet does not grow to full wisdom. It is *rectified* — but never *refuted* — by the mere power of that which, at any particular time, *is*. On the contrary it confutes and judges the existent if it is failing, and failing inhumanly; indeed, first and foremost it provides the *standard* to measure such facticity precisely as departure from the Right." Ernst Bloch, *A Philosophy of the Future* (New York, 1970), p. 91.

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THE WARREN COURT AND CORPORATE CAPITALISM

by Joan Roelofs

Contemporary left-wing critics of American institutions either ignore the Supreme Court, or accept the liberal view of it. That view, particularly as applied to the Court during Warren's Chief Justiceship (1953-1969), is that the Court was benign, that it acted as a counterweight to repressive measures of the "political" branches, that it did not participate in "cold war" policies, that its major decisions had nothing to do with economic developments, and that its influence has been highly "progressive." Because the Warren Court has been so frequently attacked from the right, radicals have hastened to defend it. Yet the saner right-wing critics reveal a great deal about what the Court was up to, and radical scholarship can profit from their arguments.[1]

This article attempts to unravel several puzzles. How could the Court have been such an anomaly among elite institutions during the Cold War period? Harvard, Hollywood and Harpers fell into line. Why do we need such an institution as the Supreme Court, if government is the "executive committee of the ruling class?" The Court occasionally overrules and more frequently influences the output of the "political" branches of government. Finally, how could such a powerful institution be floating in the realm of pure justice, undetermined by the economic base of the society?

The key to putting the Court in its proper place is to accept the notion of the Court as "progressive" and to examine the implications of that designation. Before the late 1930s, the Court was generally regarded by liberal scholarship as a bulwark of capitalism and especially in the service of nationalizing monopolistic forms. "The Court's power is a natural outcome of the necessity for maintaining capitalist dominance under democratic forms; . . . judicial review has proved to be a very convenient channel through which the driving forces of American economic life have found expression and achieved victory. Such a view could be documented by reference to the history of the judicial power since Marshall first established it in 1803 by his decision in Marbury v. Madison. The high points in the story would be Marshall's use of the judicial power to give enlarged scope to the expansion of business enterprise, the development of the doctrine of due process of law after the Civil War, and the reading of a laissez-faire social philosophy into the Constitution in the decades around the turn of the century."[2]

1. E.G., Raoul Berger, *Government by Judiciary: The Transformation of the Fourteenth Amendment* (Cambridge: Harvard U. Press, 1977); Alfred de Grazia, *Essay on Apportionment and Representative Government* (Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1963); Ward Elliott, *The Rise of Guardian Democracy: The Supreme Court's Role in Voting Rights Disputes: 1845-1969* (Cambridge: Harvard U. Press, 1974); Alexander Bickel, *The Supreme Court and the Idea of Progress* (New York: Harper, 1970).

2. Max Lerner, "The Divine Right of Judges," *The People, Politics and the Politician*, Ed. A.N. Christensen and E.M. Kirkpatrick (New York: Henry Holt, 1941), p. 578.

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After 1937, when the Court abandoned *Laissez-faire*, it did not thereby cease serving the interests of capitalism. It merely took a broader viewpoint — that of "social engineering" — in accordance with the presumed long-range interests of the dominant corporate capitalism.[3] While it is today fashionable to view the output of the Court as an emanation of the biases and preferences of the justices, the Court has not ceased to be a vehicle for ideology. "In the United States the history of political theory since the founding of the Republic has resided in the Supreme Court."[4]

The point of view that dominated the Warren Court was that of judicial activism.[5] This was a variant of "social engineering" derived from the Progressive movement as well as the sociological jurisprudence of Roscoe Pound, Louis Brandeis, and Benjamin Cardozo. The Progressive movement absorbed the simmering protest movements of the early 19th century, and spearheaded the rationalization and nationalization of capitalism. *Laissez-faire* was no longer in the interest of corporate capitalism. This was so because of the long history of abuses which provoked protest and harmed the reputations of the established, hence currently "clean" operators. It was also seen as dysfunctional after the depression of the 1930s. Capitalism required for its normal functioning a great deal of government intervention for the promotion of stability.

The Progressive movement was not originally oriented to the Supreme Court. Nevertheless, on the national level the movement faced the formidable barrier of Congressional politics, rife with localistic, reactionary, petty bourgeois, and even populist elements. The Congressional tentacles extended deeply into the federal bureaucracy; neither social engineering nor any coherent political policy might be expected from the administration. In the 1930s, the newly created New Deal agencies did enjoy some temporary independence and were indeed the hopes of the "technocracy" movement. They were typically staffed by young lawyers trained in "legal realist" and "socio-logical jurisprudence" traditions. However, these agencies soon turned into normal Congressional fiefdoms.

The federal judiciary, on the other hand, had its share of politicians, but many of its most able and articulate members came from the ranks of the corporate bar. Many of these judges had come under the influence of sociological jurisprudence in the elite law schools. Further channels of this ideology were the law reviews and law clerks assigned to each federal judge: "...the clerks...are a conduit from the law schools to the Court. They bring with them...the intellectual atmosphere from which they are newly come."[6]

3. See G. William Domhoff, *The Higher Circles: The Governing Class in America* (New York: Vintage, 1970), Chap. 6, "How the Power Elite Shapes Social Legislation."

4. *The End of Liberalism: Ideology, Policy and the Crisis of Public Authority* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1969), p. 314.

5. This was the case even though not all judges took this position, and all judges refrained from activism at times.

6. Alexander Bickel, *Politics and the Warren Court* (new york: Harper and Row, 1965), p. 143.

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Academic lawyers increasingly permeated the corporate bar and consequently the federal judiciary. One of the most influential of these was Felix Frankfurter. It was as a teacher, rather than as a judge, that he unequivocally advocated the doctrines of social engineering and judicial activism.[7]

Judges in America were used to an activist stance. Both the common law tradition and the task of constitutional interpretation led to habitual judicial lawmaking. Thus judges could comfortably assume a "guardian" role.[8] Furthermore, lawyers and judges had always been dominant in the ruling elite of this country. When their task became that of "saving civilization" (and by the Cold War years many finally became convinced of this) they were anxious to rise to the occasion.

The Court's function of serving the interests of the dominant economic forms is all the more important in a formally democratic state. The growth of political democracy has empowered many non-ruling class elements, while petty bourgeois and reactionary groups continue to flourish.[9] The Supreme Court during the Marshall era and again after the Civil War served the interest of the national, growing corporation, protecting it from both rear guard and avant-garde attacks of legislatures.[10] After 1937, corporate interests were more frequently expressed in legislative and executive actions, as the "New Deal," permeated by the interests of corporate capitalism, itself permeated Washington. Consequently, the Court did not have to "strike down" legislation and executive actions. Rather its role was to legitimate these new forms of intervention. As one student of the Court expresses it: "The Positive State exemplifies in classic style a synthesis along Hegelian lines: thesis-antithesis-synthesis. The *thesis*: During the nineteenth century the state actively encouraged, through assistance programs and the legal system, the growth of business enterprise. The *antithesis*: A trend toward egalitarianism, particularly in the post-Civil War period, may be seen in the Granger and Populism movements. The liberty of the corporations, protected by law including the Supreme Court, came to loggerheads with the rising tide toward equality and the spread of mass suffrage. Something had to give; that "something" was the co-optation of welfare programs by the business community — the 'ruling class' — in a *synthesis* that at once kept the 'masses' quiescent and enabled the rich to remain rich and even to wax richer. The Supreme Court, ultimate guardian of corporate privilege, tried for a time to stave off that synthesis, but it had to give way in the 1930s when the economic system broke down in the Great Depression."[11]

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7. Jerold Auerbach, *Unequal Justice: Lawyers and Social Change in Modern America* (new York: Oxford U. Press, 1976), p. 171.
8. Elliott, *op. cit.*
9. Thus other Westrn nations must dilute democracy with repressive institutions, e.g., administrative elite in France and monarchy in Great Britain.
10. A.S. Miller, *The Supreme Court and American Capitalism* (new york: Free Press, 1968), p. 24.
11. A.S. Miller, *The Modern Corporate State* (Westport: Greenwood, 1976), p. 93.

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In sum, the Warren Court activism was the judicial version of "progressive" social engineering. The following are the major components of this ideology:

1. Socialism must be prevented by directing social change in such a way that grievances of the masses are heeded, while the corporate elite remains dominant: "There will come a revolt of the people against the capitalists, unless the aspirations of the people are given some adequate legal expression, ...Whatever and however strong our convictions against the extension of governmental function may be, we shall inevitably be swept farther toward socialism unless we can curb the excesses of our financial magnates."[12]

2. The agents of this social engineering are to be an elite of judges and lawyers.[13]

3. Capitalism must be rationalized if it is to survive. Robber barons and naked exploitation must go. The Court's role becomes that of legitimating economic intervention.[14]

4. Public administration must be centralized to serve the centralized economy.

5. Defects in the U.S. upon which international communism can "capitalize" must be eliminated.

6. Offer "symbolic reassurance" where defects cannot be remedied; the illusion of equality, justice and freedom can aid in social control.[15] Court decisions appearing to enhance liberty can be generously offered when most individuals are locked into a governmental or corporate structure that is intolerant of dissent.[16]

7. Defuse potentially revolutionary American movements.

8. Redefine the Bill of Rights to exclude advocacy of communism from its protection. The Court must legitimate repression.

Two consequences of the Court's increasingly activist role in shaping the future of America will be mentioned here. First of all, it helped to accelerate the trend toward the nationalization of American politics, economy, and culture. By the time of the Warren Court, federalism was no longer seen to impose any significant limitation on Congressional commerce, taxing, and spending powers. Nationalization of the Bill of Rights proceeded apace, partly through the contradictory concept of substantive due process. Broad use of the 14th Amendment's equal protection clause made the Court the overseer of state legislation. This was exercised most notably in regard to race and legislative apportionment, but carries the potential of scrutiny into every

12. L.D. Brandeis, *Business: A Profession* (Boston: Small, Maynard & Co., 1933), p. 320. In A.T. Mason and R.H. Leach, *In Quest of Freedom: American Political Thought and Practice* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1959), p. 372.

13. *Ibid.* For modern adherents of this theory see William J. Brennan, Jr., "Law and Social Sciences," *The Supreme Court: Views from Inside*, Ed. Alan F. Westin (New York: W.W. Norton, 1961), p. 149; and A.S. Miller, "Science Challenges Law," *Law and Social Change*, Ed. Stuart Nagel (Beverly Hills; Sage, 1970), p. 114.

14. For a critical view of this phenomenon see Jürgen Habermas, *Toward a Rational Society* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1970) p. 102.

15. Murray Edelman, *The Symbolic Uses of Politics* (Urbana, Ill.: U. of Illinois Press, 1964).

16. Miller, *The Supreme Court and American Capitalism*, p. 230.

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area of state activity, litigants willing (and they usually are).

A second consequence of the activist Court was to further the trend toward "depoliticization." As described by Habermas: "The depoliticization of the mass of the population and the decline of the public realm as a political institution are components of a system of domination that tends to exclude practical questions from public discussion. The bureaucratized exercise of power has its counterpart in a public realm confined to spectacles and acclamation."[17] The Supreme Court is even more remote from the people than is the bureaucracy. When the Court deals with vital social issues, popular political institutions are not forced to confront them. Even when popular passions are aroused in matters under consideration by the Court (as in the recent Bakke case) discussion tends to be channelled into narrow, legalist terms, obviating consideration of what the best policy might be. Ordinarily, however, most people are simply unaware of Court decisions.[18]

As a result, there is increasing alienation among the American populace. This is particularly noticeable at the local level, where political participation by "non-elites" was formerly common. Today interest is declining in school board elections (except among vendors, etc.) because local school boards have little say in any matter of importance. It is true that unions, state education departments, professional education associations, federal law, and administrative regulations have also pre-empted local decision-making. Nevertheless it remains significant that courts are now involved in every area of education policy making and in some cases have assumed direct administration.[19] One symptom of this alienation is the tax protest movement which is in part a demand for participatory democracy: why pay the piper when you cannot call the tune?

What of the intended consequences of "social engineering?" Did the Court succeed in channelling reform in the desired direction and protecting the long-range interests of corporate capitalism against attack from right and left? This is discussed more fully in the conclusion, but here it can be said that the period saw a considerable degree of rationalization of the polity. This provided a useful underpinning for the stage of extraordinary growth in size and power of U.S. corporations.

While beyond the scope of this article, the current Burger Court has by no means reversed the trend of the Warren Court. However, it is not under the same pressure to pursue rationalization; Court decisions are of lesser importance in the current era of American capitalism. The multinational corporations face great opportunities and great risks, but much of this is beyond the ken of any organ of domestic politics. Today, further rationalization is not so important, more crucial is the maintenance of a

17. *Op. cit.*, p. 75.

18. James P. Levine and Theodore Becker, "Toward and Beyond a Theory of Supreme Court Impact," *Law and Social Change, op. cit.*, p. 88.

19. Ray Rist and Ronald Anson, *Education, Social Science and the Judicial Process* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1977), p. 1x.

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docile population, cooperative work force and adequate buying power (through wages or welfare). A remarkable decision of the Burger Court, without doubt (in my mind) the most humanitarian decision of the Court in its history, Roe v. Wade, is in addition of excellent service to American capitalism.[20] The availability of abortion permits more women to remain longer in the labor force. This is a boon as they are both lower paid and less rebellious than men. Furthermore, by making two-wage families the norm, the market for cars, houses, applicances, etc., is prevented from collapsing.[21]

The remainder of this article will examine some of the major lines of decision of the Warren Court from the point of view of "social engineering." This article will not deal directly with the strictly economic decisions of the Court. However, it should be noted that: "In matters directly affecting business, as in labor relations, anti-trust and tax issues, the Warren Court has been simply an enunciator of the social capitalist *status quo* in American politics."[22]

Civil Rights

Brown v. the Board of Education of Topeka did not come out of the blue; its antecedents lay in the cases protesting unequal treatment or lack of provision for black graduate students.[23] A reversal of the Plessy decision could be regarded as long overdue. Nevertheless, by declaring de jure segregation per se unconstitutional, the Court was attempting to change radically the way of life in all the southern and most of the border states. The Court is not usually anxious to interpose itself so drastically on American life, as a matter of self-protection if not adherence to majoritarian norms. Furthermore, a decision so sweeping, which had poor chances of enforcement (by either political agencies or lower federal courts) was likely to cause permanent damage to the Court's prestige.

"Equal protection of the laws" does not in itself imply that all segregation is unconstitutional. The Court, by a tie vote in the 1977 Vorcheimer case, has sustained sexual segregation in public schools. Exhaustive research on the intentions of the framers of the 14th Amendment has indicated that (myopic as they may have been) they did not regard public school segregation (by race or sex) as a denial of equal protection.[24]

20. 410 U.S. 113 (1973).

21. Another way of supporting the market in an inflationary situation is the increase of homosexual couples, who are usually childless and both working. One would expect liberalization of laws in this area at this stage of capitalism.

22. Alan Westin, "When the Public Judges the Court," *The Supreme Court under Earl Warren* (New York: Quadrangle, 1972), p. 56. It is also significant that the Court's fiercest application of the anti-trust laws was against the Brown Shoe Company. See Theodore J. St. Antoine, "Judicial Valour and the Warren Court's Labor Decisions," *The Warren Court: A Critical Analysis,* Ed. Richard Saylor, Barry Boyer, and Robert Gooding, Jr. (New York: Chelsea House, 1968). See also Karl Klare "Judicial Deradicalization of the Wagner Act and the Origins of Modern Legal Consciousness, 62 *Minnesota Law Review* 265 (1978).

23. Missouri ex rel Gaines v. Canada 305 U.S. 337 (1938); Sipuel v. University of Oklahoma, 332 U.S. 631 (1948); McLaurin v. Oklahoma State Regents, 339 U.S. 637 (1950); Sweatt v. Painter, 339 U.S. 629 (1950).

24. Berger, *op.cit.*, p. 100.

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The great pressure on the Court to reach the decision it did in Brown came from an urgency to promote social change "Indeed, the Brown case, as we shall see, was no fortuitous legal aberration but was instead the fruit of the collective hopes and efforts of a distinguished group of progressive jurists. Included in this group were such eminent figures as Roscoe Pound, Louis D. Brandeis, and Benjamin Cardozo, who were largely responsible for the development of the sociological school of jurisprudence, which stood for a more enlightened understanding of the nature of role of law in a rapidly changing democratic society."[25] The litigation itself was part of the long-term effort of the NAACP to have segregation declared unconstitutional. The choice of litigation rather than grass-roots activism was based on the consideration that the courts would be more receptive than other governmental agencies to arguments for legal equality.[26] This was also the preferred strategy of the legal leadership of the NAACP: men who had themselves been trained in sociological jurisprudence and who had strong commitments to social engineering.[27]

The effort by the NAACP was "elitist" from the start. Reform of American race relations was to be imposed from above. The vast majority of black people were non-participants in their own liberation (assuming that Brown would be enforced and effective). In addition, the actual plaintiffs played a passive and sometimes unwilling role. The cases argued with Brown (which included appeals from South Carolina, Virginia, and Delaware) were chosen for strategic reasons. The leading case, against the Board of Education of Topeka, is instructive. Topeka was not selected as a test case because there was great unhappiness in its segregated schools. On the contrary, it was selected because the black schools were about as good as the white ones and the NAACP wanted to challenge the principle of segregation and not confound the issue with substantive inequality.

Unfortunately for this strategy, black teachers and administrators in Topeka had developed considerable pride in their school system. They were also worried about their own jobs if desegregation should occur, and they had opposed the NAACP case from the outset.[28] They were unprepared for the Brown decision, and like diehard segregationists elsewhere felt themselves victims of a remote power. The elitist approach taken by the NAACP would (if successful) have required the destruction of many centers of black pride and power. Ironically, black churches, untouched by legal and constitutional requirements, have remained in the forefront of the civil rights struggle.

The blend of "activism" and "self-restraint" on the Warren Court might not have produced so sweeping a decision as Brown, or a unanimous one, but the political atmosphere lent it urgency. Warren himself was quite prepared

25. Paul L. Rosen, *The Supreme Court and Social Science* (Urbana: U. of Illinois Press, 1972) p. xi.
26. Richard Kluger, *Simple Justice* (New York: Knopf, 1976), p. 133.
27. Auerbach, *op. cit.*, p. 198.
28. Kluger, *op. cit.*, p. 392.

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to act in the role of a Platonic guardian and felt that it was entirely proper for the Court to serve as an instrument of social progress.[29] There is evidence that he applied considerable pressure to reach a unanimous decision.[30] The reports of the judicial conferences reveal that a convincing factor was the feeling that the reputation of the country was at stake.[31] Many diplomats from "Third World" countries were living here and traveling throughout the country. They not only saw evidence of racial oppression, but were themselves (and their children) subjected to Jim Crow laws. Since neither Congress nor the states were prepared to dismantle the sorry edifice of segregation, the Court stepped into the breach.

This is not to impugn the humanitarianism of the justices, or to suggest that the unconstitutionality of segregation is not an entirely reasonable interpretation of the 14th Amendment. What was unusual about the case was the Court's willingness to launch a revolution devoid of political or even grass-roots popular support. Its desire for "results" was even more evident in the decision reached in Bolling v. Sharpe, which declared school segregation in Washington, D.C. a violation of the due process clause of the Fifth Amendment. Since the Federal government was not constitutionally obliged to provide equal protection of the laws a deus ex machina had to be found.

Since the argument here is that the Brown and Bolling decisions were an expression of the social engineering ideology, some consideration must be given to the use of social science in these cases. There is some controversy as to whether the social science evidence (cited in footnote 11 in Brown) was the basis for the decision, or merely supportive of it.[32]

The social science findings were essential to the grounds on which the Court based its decision. The Court might have said that segregation itself was a denial of equal treatment and left it at that. However, it argued that segregation created feelings of inferiority and impaired learning ability and for those reasons equal protection was being denied in segregated school systems.

This was not a conclusion that could be derived from "common sense," and consequently the scientific evidence carried a considerable burden. Common sense might well suggest that segregation was demeaning, but that it impaired learning ability was not immediately evident. Today, persons on both sides of this question, including some of the original researchers, acknowledge the sketchy quality of the scientific evidence that segregation causes feelings of

29. *Ibid.*, p. 667.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 698.
31. *Ibid.*
32. These were the articles cited in Brown v. Bd. of Ed.,: "K. B. Clark, Effect of Prejudice and Discrimination of Personality Development (Midcentury White House Conference on Children and Youth, 1950); Witmer and Kotinsky, Personality in the Making (1952), c. VI; Deutscher and Chein, The Psychological Effects of Enforced Segregation: A Survey of Social Science Opinion, 26. J. Psychol. 259 (1948); Chein, What are the Psychological Effects of Segregation Under Conditions of Equal Facilities? 3 Int. J. Opinion and Attitude Res. 229 (1949); Brameld, Educational Costs in Discrimination and National Welfare (MacIver, ed., 1949), 44-48; Frazier, The Negro in the United States (1949), 674-681. And see generally Myrdal, "An American Dilemma" (1944).

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inferiority and reduced intellectual potential.[33] Furthermore, we now hear allegations that sexually and racially segregated institutions may encourage competence. At the time of Brown, the very scene in Court might have seemed to refute the "impairment of learning" theory: the brightest stars of the NAACP legal staff had largely come from segregated educational institutions, such as Dunbar High School and Howard University.

The evidence, whether or not needed to support the decision, was relevant for prediction of its consequences. In the narrowest sense, the purpose of Brown was to promote the equal educational achievement of blacks: they ought to be getting the same quality of education as whites. The "social engineering" motives transcended this objective. The Court certainly wished to end the stigma of separate education. They may also have hoped to trigger the self-assertion of blacks to demand civil rights within the system. At the most abstract level, Brown was to provide "symbolic reassurance." Thus, if we inquire as to whether Brown succeeded as social engineering the answer must be found at different levels. 1. It was a success at the symbolic level. It indicated to American blacks and the world at large that the U.S. had a commitment to end segregation. 2. It stimulated the civil rights movement, which led to further progress toward integration. 3. It ended de jure segregation and promoted integration in a great many school systems. On the other hand, the development of private schools and white flight from central cities eroded some of these gains. 4. Equal educational achievement of whites and blacks (correcting for socio-economic level) remains elusive. The reasons for this are not clear.[34] Furthermore, interracial contact has not always promoted greater harmony and tolerance.[35] The black power movement (like the women's movement) has produced new demands for segregated institutions, which are believed to be conducive to high achievement.

There is now a general feeling that there are no easy answers. The unintended consequences of reform from above have given pause to many. Solutions based on confrontation between even the most antagonistic groups sometimes yield more workable and longer lasting arrangements than those imposed from above.

In the short run, the Brown decision was in accordance with the interests of corporate capitalism. It was viewed as a threat only by lower status whites (and black school personnel). It announced to the world that a capitalist society could be just and concerned with human rights (despite our lack of ratification of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights). Insofar as it did lead to genuine progress for blacks (both directly through better educational opportunities and indirectly through stimulation of the civil rights movement) it brought them into the American consumer class, while dispelling any ideas of revolution that might be circulating. The New Deal had done little for blacks; the Brown decision supplied this part of the "conservative revolution." As to "the fire next time," who knows?

33. David Cohen and Janet Weiss, "Social Science, Social Policy, Schools and Race," in Rist and Anson, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

34. See the discussion in Rist and Anson, *op. cit.*

35. *Ibid.*, p. 77.

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Civil Liberties

In this area, the Warren Court reiterated the doctrines of the earlier Schenck and Gitlow cases.[36] In Schenck the concept of free expression was diluted to exclude advocacy of radical ideas. Gitlow began the nationalization of the Bill of Rights through the illogical concept of "substantive" due process, found in the 14th Amendment. Thus repression was justified and legitimated, at the national and state level.

The "clear and present danger" doctrine was fictional in its original application. Schenck was spreading "dangerous" pacifist ideas with no observable effect. Gitlow's communism was hardly likely to spark a revolution: "There was no evidence of any effect resulting from the publication and circulation of the Manifesto...."[37] Nevertheless, his conviction was unheld because: "Such utterances, by their very nature, involve danger to the public peace and to the security of the state. They threaten breaches of the peace and ultimate revolution.... The state may...suppress the threatened danger in its incipiency...."[38]

The repression of socialist movements and ideas in the post-World War I period was consequently legitimated by the Supreme Court decisions. Similarly, in the post-World War II period, the Warren Court sustained the principle of the Dennis case, that suppression of Communist advocacy was legitimate.[39] When the Court upheld convictions and citations for contempt of radicals, it cited "self-preservation" as the justification.[40] However, when it reversed convictions, or vetoed administrative proceedings, the Court based this on the "vagueness" of laws or the violation of "due process" in their application.[41] So long as legislatures and congressional committees applied their repression in a tidy manner, no violation of freedom of speech was found.[42]

Contrary to popular mythology the Court did not enhance freedom of expression. Its "social engineering" took two forms. By insisting on due process before repressive acts could occur, it created an aura of freedom, which nevertheless encouraged no one to express controversial ideas. Partly this was because any liberalization that did occur (such as permitting radicals to travel abroad by allowing them passports), came after radical movements had been destroyed by other means (e.g., McCarthyism). Furthermore, the Court directed governmental agencies on how to write good repressive legislation, the kind that would pass the Court's muster.

Eventually, administrative agencies and the private sector took over the job

36. Schenck v. U.S. 249 U.S. 47 (1919; Gitlow v. N.Y., 268 U.S. 652 (1925).
37. *Ibid.*
38. *Ibid.*
39. Dennis v. U.S., 341 U.S. 494 (1951).
40. Ullman v. U.S., 350 U.S. 422 (1956); Barenblatt v. U.S., 360 U.S. 109 (1959); Scales v. U.S., 367 U.S. 203 (1961); Communist Party of the U.S. v. Subversive Activities Control Board, 367 U.S. 1 (1961).
41. Watkins v. U.S. 354 U.S. 178 (1957); Sweezy v. New Hampshire 354 U.S. 234 (1957); Koningsberg v. State Bar 366 U.S. 36 (1961).
42. E.g., Barenblatt, *op. cit.*

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of repression, through harassment, intimidation, and infultration, so that what laws said and what the Court said made little difference. Freedom of speech is illusory for most Americans who have jobs, or who would like to have one. Of course, there is freedom everywhere in the world for people who merely want to support the system. Conformity is the price paid for the security (sic) of the corporation.

The Warren years saw increasing conformity imposed on American political views. The undemocratic practice of judicial review has aften been justified by the claim that the Court upholds our liberties against repressive majorities. This is not borne out by the results. Most individuals who were in fact vindicated by the Court had their careers destroyed and their energies sapped by the litigation process. Individuals not involved in test cases have not met with a liberalized atmosphere because of such vindications.

Would our liberties have been more secure if not for the Supreme Court's role? Perhaps so. Leaving the matter to judges can have a lulling effect. As Justice Jackson stated: "In this country,...we rarely have a political issue made of any kind of invasion of civil liberty. On the contrary, district attorneys who have been rebuked by the courts are frequently promoted by the public. The attitude seems to be, leave it to the judges. Years after the event takes place, the judges make their pronouncement, often in the form of letting some admittedly guilty person go, and that ends the matter.... Whether the political conscience is relieved because the responsibility here is made largely a legal one, I cannot say, but of this I am sure: any court which undertakes by its legal processes to enforce civil liberties needs the support of an enlightened and vigorous public opinion which will be intelligent and discriminating as to what...questions are involved in those cases. I do not think the American public is enlightened on this subject."[43]

The "nationalization" of civil liberties issues removes them further from the people. The Constitution, despite interpretations beginning with Gitlow, clearly leaves civil liberties in the hands of state government, except for the requirements of the 14th Amendment relating to due process. The Court has amended the Constitution to give the Federal courts scrutiny over duly enacted and enforced state laws. Were this function to return to the states, perhaps a concerned citizenry might examine state laws and executive actions with a view to maximizing liberty. Of course, there is nothing to prevent state courts from enforcing the Bills of Rights in their own state constitutions or the federal Bill of Rights, but the focus of claimants is directed elsewhere. The need to make a federal case (which takes years, money, energy, and supporters) out of every violation of liberty does not encourage a vigorous defense of rights.[44]

The Court's decisions concerning church and state exhibit no clear tendency, as they are so inconsistent with each other. The Court has stretched

43. "The Supreme Court as a Political Institution," *The Supreme Court: Views from Inside,* Ed. Alan F. Westin (New York: Norton, 1965), p. 170.

44. Levine and Becker, *op. cit.*

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some points to find that state "establishment of religion" violates "due process." At the time of the ratification of the Bill of Rights state establishment of religion was a common practice, and there is no evidence that the Bill of Rights was intended to overturn it.[45] Thus the decision in Walz v. Tax Commission (permitting tax exemptions for churches) is illogical from the Court's point of view, which maintains that establishment is forbidden by the states.[46] It is, however, logical from a clear reading of the Constitution, which forbids only the national government from establishing religion. On the other hand, the Court has not protected us from such established institutions as army chaplains, who square bellicosity with God. These gentlepeople unlike Schenck (the pacifist) are not seen to present any "clear and present danger."

Criminal Justice

The Court's decisions in this area had a clear constitutional basis. The due process clause of the 14th Amendment most obviously applies to criminal cases (rather than public utility rates, or state aid to religion, in bothof which it has been used). However, the Court has great latitude as a "super legislature" in this area. First of all, due process is a vague concept. It has been interpreted by Supreme Court justices variously to mean: all the criminal justice provisions of the Bill of Rights;[47] only those "implicit in the concept of ordered liberty;"[48] and procedures, whether or not mentioned in the Bill of Rights, that ensure basic decency or fairness.[49] In practice, various combinations of these positions have led to the incorporation of almost all the Bill of Rights provisions into the due process clause of the 14th Amendment. That does not end the matter, for the provisions themselves are not easy to define: cruel and unusual punishment, unreasonable search and seizure, assistance of counsel (when, and of what quality?), etc. Appealing to time immemorial or common law conceptions does not help much when lie detectors, electronic surveillance, and other modern techniques of interrogation are in question. Consequently, frequent redefinition of these principles keeps state law enforcement agencies in a considerable state of confusion (and anger).

The Constitution is unclear about what remedy should be applied to violations of due process. The Court has argued that the only effective remedies are invalidating convictions where procedures were improper, and excluding evidence unconstitutionally obtained. This has occasioned a great deal of controversy, because while it has resulted in the freeing of obviously guilty defendants, it has not served greatly to protect the innocent. Instead, it has further weakened our criminal justice system, by increasing the tendency

45. Leonard Levy, *Judgments: Essays on American Constitutional History* (Chicago: Quadrangle, 1972), p. 170.
46. 397 U.S. 664 (1970).
47. See Justice Black's dissent in Adamson v. California, 332 U.S. 46 (1947).
48. Palko v. Connecticut, 302 U.S. 319 (1937).
49. Rochin v. California, 342 U.S. 165 (1952).

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towards plea bargaining, which bypasses the many constitutional safeguards (or traps) a trial entails. Justice based on technicalities puts a premium on legal skill, which is not uniformly distributed despite the Gideon rule.[50]

The Court has been under considerable political attack because of its criminal justice decisions. Unlike the segregation cases, which affected the daily lives mainly of those of low status (although politicians naturally responded to this animosity) the law enforcement decisions were regarded as a challenge by an elite group: state attorneys general, law enforcement officials, and judges. Why did the Court challenge such formidable adversaries? One commentator has suggested that it was simply that power begets power, and after the Brown decision the Court realized that it could get away with Miranda v. Arizona, Baker v. Carr, etc.[51]

An approving analysis gives the Court's motives as follows: "It is to the credit of the Supreme Court that it recognized that the nation was in the midst of a social revolution before this became apparent to most of the elected representatives of the people, and that it sought to eliminate the basic defects in our system for the administration of criminal justice within our present structure. The result of this perceptive approach has been to immunize the Court from much of the alienation expressed against other institutions of our society not only by the disadvantaged, but also by large numbers of our youth, upon whom the future of the nation depends."[52] There is no doubt that among the aims of the Court was promoting the idea that justice for all could be obtained in any court in the land. This again, is not to question the commitment of the justices to the idea of a fair trial. It is, however, to suggest that some great urgency in the matter led the Court to take great political risks. The criminal justice decisions were in accordance with the generally centralizing tendencies in American public administration. This trend was regarded as ominous by Justice Jackson: "The Court has been drawing into the federal system more and more control by federal agencies over local police agencies. I have no doubt that the latter are often guilty of serious invasions of individual rights. But there are more fundamental questions involved in the interpretation of the antiquated, cumbersome, and vague civil rights statutes which give the Department of Justice the right to prosecute state officials.... I cannot say that our country could have no central police without becoming totalitarian, but I can say with great conviction that it cannot become totalitarian without a centralized national police.... I think in the long run the transgressions of liberty by the Federal Government, with its all-powerful organization, are much more to be feared than those of the several states, which have a greater capacity for self-correction."[53] No doubt, at the time

50. That lawyers must be provided in felony cases in state trials. Gideon v. Wainwright, 372 U.S. 335 (1963).

51. A.S. Miller, "Toward a Concept of Constitutional Duty," *Supreme Court Review*, ed. P. Kurland (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), p. 231.

52. A. Kenneth Pye, "The Warren Court and Criminal Procedure," in Saylor, *op. cit.*, p. 66-67.

53. *Op. cit.*, p. 163.

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this was published in (1955), this view may have been regarded as paranoid, right-wing, and allied to racist states-righters. Today, there is increasing evidence of the use of police state tactics by the federal government, and Jackson seems not far-fetched at all. The Warren Court undoubtedly was not attempting to implement a police state, but its decision did further the nationalization of "justice." For the problem of crime, the supporters of the Court recommended federal funds for training, equipment, and better coordination of police forces throughout the nation.[54]

The Court's conception of due process was not derived from predictive social science research. Little existed to indicate which procedures were feasible, which would ensure fairness, which would reduce crime or encourage rehabilitation.[55] In the Miranda case, the Court supported its decision with a 1931 National Commission on Law Observance Report (Wickersham Report), police manuals from several cities suggesting "effective" interrogation methods, and articles in law journals attesting to the use of the third degree.[56]

The outcome of the Court's decisions was certainly some improvement in police discipline. However, the imposition of a varying federal standard on state court and police procedures has been extremely difficult to enforce and has produced great confusion. Even the symbolic reassurance in this area is weak; the "alienation" previously referred to has not been dispelled. As to the fairness inherent in our current system of justice, after all the Warren era reforms, one authority observes: "The administration of justice in America is pockmarked by systematic discrimination against blacks, the poor, women, juveniles, and consumers. Although special rules attempt to place litigants on a more equal footing than they may claim in other portions of the political process, the administration of justice still reflects the inequalities of American society."[57] Evasion of federal rules is common. Furthermore: "Bargaining with defendants over their punishment rather than determining their guilt by trial is a perversion of the adversary process that developed without any explicit direction by political leaders. It represents an adaptation to the surging caseload of the courts that has resulted from the growth of America's population and perhaps an increase in crime."[58]

The question of whether there is more crime today than 25 years ago is likely to lead to a statistical debate. However, there is certainly a great deal of crime (of all kinds). We might have expected a decrease in the crime rate with the increasing affluence and security of the post-World War II period. Never would the paranoid suggestion be made that the Warren Court decisions intended to encourage criminals. It is nevertheless interesting to note the coincidence that (a) the Court (although committed to social engineering)

54. Pye, *op. cit.*, p. 77.
55. Donald Horowitz, *The Courts and Social Policy* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings, 1977), p. 277-8.
56. Miranda v. Arizona, 384 U.S. 436 (1966).
57. Herbert Jacob, *Justice in America: Courts, Lawyers and the Judicial Process*, 2nd Ed. (Boston: Little, Brown, 1972), p. 225.
58. *Ibid.*, p. 226.

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seemed not greatly concerned with the problem of crime (unlike its worries about the danger of subversion), and (b) crime serves an important function in our economy. Burglary, for instance, gives an extra stimulus to the consumer goods industry; it is a system of private (unwilling) charity. When a TV is ripped off, the former owner will buy a new one. Vandalism aids the construction industries. Arson is generally profitable all around. Capitalism requrires a growing market; consumption and destruction (no matter by whom or how) create the demand.

Crime may be even more functional in our system as a provider of employment, taking up some of the slack that is left by the shrinking personnel needs of the corporate sector. First of all, there are those people who earn their livings on a regular basis from illegal or semi-legal activities (the latter group might include such diverse occupations as accountants, pornographers, gamblers, influence peddlers, and school lunch adulterators). Secondly, there is the vast array of private security services and device manufacturers, employing an increasing number of persons (and dogs). As the volume of insurance increases, that industry can become even more labor intensive. These employment schemes may create considerable inflation, but they are no great burden on large corporations. Their costs are simply passed on to the consumer as a "crime tax." Thirdly, public employment related to social pathology, e.g., in criminal justice, mental health, and welfare systems, has grown enormously; this bill appears in the regular taxes.

None of this is to suggest that the Warren Court set out to create a crime wave. It is simply interesting to note that crime is functional in our economic system. We might reflect on the old saying: "Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves...."[59]

Reapportionment

A very cynical person might regard the entire reapportionment matter as a scheme for promoting the full employment of political scientists (well, it's better than the numbers racket). However, as we are only mildly cynical, we will have to see other functions and motives in the Court's decisions in the area of one-man, one-vote.[60]

A critic of the Warren Court, Ward Elliott, regards the reapportionment decisions (which Warren said were the most important during his Chief Justiceship) as prime evidence of the "guardian ethic."[61] This he describes as the "bureaucratic, elitist ideology of action-minded intellectuals in the

59. Karl Marx, "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte," in *Marx and Engels: Basic Writings on Politics and Philosophy*, Ed. Lewis Feuer (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1959), p. 320.

60. The major cases are: Baker v. Carr, 369 U.S. 186 (1962); Wesberry v. Sanders, 376 U.S. 1 (1964); Reynolds v. Sims, 377 U.S. 533 (1964).

61. For Warren's estimation of the importance of Baker, see A. Lewis, "A Talk with Warren on Crime, the Court, the Country," in Leonard Levy, *The Supreme Court under Earl Warren, op. cit.*, p. 170.

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modern age, most of whom thought they were beyond ideology."[62] Elliott claims that what guardians were promoting was equality in form (such as one-man, one-vote) but special privileges in substance for the experts. The actual effect of the reapportionment decisions was a shift in political power from legislatures and parties to bureaucrats, judges, and academic researchers.[63] There was also, as in the other areas of the Warren Revolution, a shift in authority from state to national government.

It is particularly ironic that the decisions spurred the centralizing tendency, because in the studies that informed and influenced the Court, a major purpose of reapportionment was said to be the revitalization of state governments.[64] A related aim was to reverse the process whereby urban governments were bypassing state governments and dealing directly with the federal government.[65] This condition was attributed to malapportioned state legislatures: "Problems like slum clearance, urban traffic congestion, race relations, juvenile delinquency, day nurseries to aid working mothers, [sic] health and education, factory safety, workmen's compensation, and a score of others plague city people but are often unknown in rural areas. Without adequate funds and state cooperation, cities are powerless to solve these problems unaided. Yet, the rurally dominated legislatures — unfamiliar or unsympathetic to them — too often do little or nothing to help. Is further intervention by the federal government the only answer? Or can representation in the legislatures of the states be so reconstituted that the needs and views of the urban majority receive attention and get action?"[66]

These studies did not show how malapportionment was related to bad policies or weak government, or what other causes might exist for urban dependency on the federal government. Furthermore, they ignored a considerable body of political science which indicated that issues are not decided by voters at election time.[67] Anthony Lewis, perhaps the chief guru of reapportionment, implied that political persuasion occurs through the counting of voter's ballots.[68] The "group theory" of politics seems unknown to the advocates of one-man, one-vote.[69] Studies of how state governments actually operate were plentiful at the time of the decisions. Yet the Court insisted: "Legislators represent people, not trees or acres. Legislators are elected by voters, not farms or cities or economic interests."[70]

62. Elliott, *op. cit.*, p. 2.
63. *Ibid.*, p. viii.
64. Anthony Lewis, "Legislative Apportionment and the Federal Courts," 71 *Harvard Law Review*, 1057-1098 (1958); Robert McKay, *Reapportionment: The Law and Politics of Equal Representation* (New York: The Twentieth Century Fund, 1965).
65. "A Report to the President by the Commission on Intergovernmental Relations," Meyer Kestnbaum, Chariman, June 1955, in *Legislative Apportionment: Key to Power*, Ed. Howard D. Hamilton (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), p. 3.
66. Department of Education and Research, AFL-CIO, "Government by Minority," in *ibid.*, p. 79.
67. Alexander Bickel, *Politics and the Warren Court, op.cit.*, p. 183.
68. "Legislative Apportionment: Key to Power," *op.cit.*
69. See, e.g., David Truman, *The Governmental Process* (New York: Knopf, 1951).
70. Reynolds v. Sims, 377 U.S. 533 (1964).

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The views of a critic of the Baker *et. al.* decisions, Alfred de Grazia, were somewhat more realistic. He maintained that "one man, one vote" was, even before it had been actualized, an obsolete concept. Representation was already taking place on a functional basis. This should be recognized and institutionalized, so that all important interests could be represented.[71] For example, of representatives selected on the basis of occupation, 1/20 should be housewives.[72]

Since the theory behind the reapportionment decisions bore little relationship to reality, it is not surprising that the results were disappointing. There has been considerable equalization of state legislative and congressional districts, yet we have politics as usual (if not more so). Interest group politics is more important than ever, political participation is at an all time low, and the cities, despite federal aid, are decaying fast. Of course, the problem is not merely one of faulty political institutions. Nevertheless, the institutional changes which resulted from Court decisions, namely greater power to the national government, and in particular to the federal judiciary, reinforced the trend toward "depoliticization" of the masses.

The Warren Court decisions in the three other areas have benefited some blacks, dissenters, and criminal defendants, but in the case of reapportionment it is hard to find much of an effect beyond the symbolic. To some extent (a very limited one) an illusion of political equality was created. Although Warren felt this the most important area of the Court's work, surely it was the most ephemeral.

Conclusion

The Warren Court as social engineer: A final assessment cannot be made until the end of time. However, some preliminary thoughts will be offered on the questions raised in the introduction. Has the Court helped to channel reform in a desired direction consonant with the interests of corporate capitalism? The centralizing and nationalizing effect of its decisions were in accordance with the needs of capitalism at the time. The Court legitimated the New Deal and accelerated the demise of localistic, particularistic, reactionary or radical elements in our society. The world-view of the Carnegie Corporation (which had sponsored Myrdal's *American Dilemma*), the Twentieth Century Fund (which sponsored many of the reapportionment studies) and the Ford Foundation had found a mouthpiece in the Warren Court. This view was noble and benevolent, but was notably lacking in any commitment to genuine equality and liberty. The avant-garde of capitalism, as Brandeis had advocated, was now committed to social reform, provided only those on top remained on top.

Secondly, the Court decisions ofered not only symbolic reassurance but also stimulated change within the system. Perhaps the concept of "artificial

71. *Op. cit.*, p. 166-169.
72. *Ibid.*, p. 171. He never said he was a feminist.

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negativity" is appropriate here.[73] The optimism expressed in the civil rights movement undoubtedly helped to delay the idea of revolutionary change. As long as there is some hope for peaceful, legal change, few people will take the risks associated with revolutionary action.[74] This would have been difficult anyway, as the Court legitimated post-war suppression of radical ideas, while public and private employers completed the task of effectively suppressing dissent.

Nevertheless, in the long run, the Court may have had a minimal or negative effect on the enterprise of promoting change while sustaining capitalist hegemony. First of all, handling problems on a symbolic level can discourage attempts to find better solutions. It is possible that there are no real solutions to say, the problem of unemployment among blacks, or the prevalance of crime, under corporate capitalism. In the short run, however, creativity may be discouraged by measures more symbolic than real. Furthermore, the Court's role in the enterprise of directing change from above, since it is the institution most remote from the people, has accentuated depolitization, apathy, and alienation. The federal judiciary is now involved in so many areas of policy and administration that citizen initiative seems pointless.[75] Political activity focuses more and more on interest group litigation efforts. Lawyers and judges, as Brandeis wished, are the main participants. It is significant that local school board politics, at one time an introduction to political activity for the average citizen, are now constrained in every way by judicial decisions.

The present political attitude has particular significance because disaffection is occuring on the right as well as the left. In the center, many liberals who formerly advocated social engineering are likewise disillusioned. On all sides, rule by elites, especially distant elites, is being rejected. The tax protest movement is in part a demand for participatory democracy; it has finally dawned on the liberty bell types that "no taxation without representation" must have a substantive meaning. In addition to the ordinary taxation to support expanded education, welfare, health and crime control functions, there is the extra expense, particularly onerous to small business of hiring such personnel as affirmative action officers mandated by federal law. Throwing money at problems, and decrees from on high, are no longer seen as viable solutions. The Burger court has rhetorically recognized that the judiciary is involved in too much legislative and administrative activity, but seems unable to reverse the trand in practice.

Must all "social engineering" be repressive? It is easy enough to agree that reform promoted by an elite is bound to be ephemeral and manipulative. But it is not so easy to discover how any reform or revolution for that matter can be anything other than repressive. This is one source of the current pessimism

73. See Paul Piccone, "The Crisis of One-Dimensionality," 35 *Telos* (Spring 1978), p. 43.
74. Richard Flacks, "Making History vs. Making Life," *Working Papers*, Summer, 1974, p. 56-71.
75. Berger, *op. cit.*

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shared by existentialists, democratic socialists, critical theorists and many liberals.

The association of "social science" and "socialism" is not entirely accidental. Positivism lies at the root of modern social science as well as Marxism. Implicit in both are the notions that a science of man is possible, that misery can be averted through human action (rather than passivity), that the course of history can be altered, and that the good life is knowable and attainable on this earth. These ideas are also in accordance with the original Greek conception of political science. If this positivist ethic is rejected, political scientists and sociologists might as well close up shop; they would have no function. Historians, mystics, journalists and pollsters could absorb the remaining business. This might not be the greatest tragedy to befall mankind, but the instinct for self-preservation does prod. To the question of whether there can be a non-repressive social (or political) science, there are no simple answers. First of all, a social science that assumes the existence of, or aims at the preservation of, a repressive economic system, whether it be corporate capitalism or Soviet bureaucratic communism, will only further the repression. The starting point for a liberating social science would have to be a commitment to meeting basic human needs, but it is no easy task to discover what they are. Secondly, the fruits of such research would have to be widely disseminated and applied on a local, decentralized basis by the people concerned. This rules out bureaucratically imposed reform as well as violent revolution. Such a project would require much toleration of diversity and even chaos. Thirdly, there must be full recognition that humans are a part of nature. Some of nature's own repressiveness (e.g., greater austerity) might have to be accepted. Reduced domination over nature could entail less domination over other human beings (as in relinquishing the use of nuclear power).[76] The task is formidable, but what other mission is there for social scientists?

76. David Dinsmore Comey, "Fundamental Conflict between Nuclear Power and Civil Liberties," *In These Times*, Oct. 25-31, 1978, p. 17.

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LUKACS IN WEIMAR

by Ferenc Feher

Classic or classicist personalities are characterized by the creation of norms which are subsequently imposed on their age as paradigms. In the above sense and in the humble guise of a mere interpreter of Marx, Lukacs was already a classic in the twenties: friends and foes alike admit that *History and Class Consciousness* was the single major contribution to the history of Marxism as philosophy since Marx's death.

But the framework outlined in *History and Class Consciousness* collapsed at the end of the twenties, and not solely because of the Comintern's pressures and condemnations. At that time when there was so much opposition, it would have been easy to oppose the official interdiction. But the prospects for an immediate radical redemption of the world by the international proletariat, as presupposed by Lukács' work, disappeared in the late twenties. Lukács, the romantic-anticapitalist rebel who hated alienated capitalist "life" as the corollary of everything repugnant to him, had no intention of forfeiting the promised land of revolution no matter what it turned out to be, precisely because only the promised land and nothing else held out any promise. This was particularly applicable to the Socialists, whom he saw as nothing but a pseudo-radical version of the liberal parliamentary opposition. He had to decide and he did. He renounced his radical philosophy and, following the Hegelian pattern, he made his own "reconciliation with reality"—Stalin's reality. In this sense, his *The Young Hegel* is his philosophical autobiography culminating with his own reconciliation, which became all the more significant with the coming about and expansion of right-wing dictatorships. Although he described this state of affairs in political terms (Popular Front as opposed to old-fashioned "sectarianism"), it was actually a resigned philosophical position prompted by the lack of an offensive strategy. It meant the mobilization of traditional Enlightenment and humanism against a world turning against reason and humanism, and the acceptance of what was called "socialism" in order to transform its "crudeness," penetrate its "barbarian crust," and gradually fill it with the spirit of humanism and Enlightenment.

Lukács' works on the Weimar period of German classical culture exemplify this "existential choice." They deal with representative personalities who could not represent mainstream German culture precisely because they were somehow too radical. Thus, as Michel Löwy has pointed out, Lukács' portrayal of the symbolic character of Hölderlin's tragedy closely resembles Trotsky's tragedy. A similar situation obtains with Georg Forster, the head of the Jacobin Mainz revolution and a rigorous classicist critic of German culture co-habiting with the mundane powers of feudalism. Lukács unhesitatingly acknowledges the moral greatness and un-German (i.e., insubordinate) spirit of French revolution radicals, but they are discarded as possible models for

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Germany precisely because of their uncompromising radicalism and lack of flexibility. One of them ends his life in the mysticism of heroic death and the lonely night of madness, the other in complete political isolation. Lukács sometimes goes as far as to become slanderous towards young radicals: he not only emphasizes Friedrich Schlegel's conversion to traditional catholicism and Metternich, but "uncovers" its source in the overexalted *Jugenstil of Enfant*—Schlegel's first works written while he was a persecuted *enfant terrible* and convinced Francophile. The way he describes Michael Kleist, the right-wing radical who opposed moderate Prussian conservatism (or half-hearted liberalism), is typical: Kleist is not only condemned for fanaticism and "reactionary instincts" which crippled his allegedly unparalleled theatrical genius, but is juxtaposed with more moderate conservatives such as Eichendorff who turn out to be superior precisely because they were less radical. All radicalism is a bad omen for Lukács during the 1930s-1940s. The historical models are great figures such as Goethe and Hegel who went through their *Sturm und Drang* during their youth, but learned to adjust to the increasingly prosaic character of bourgeois life—a reified outcome of frozen revolutions. Lukács' new dialectic elaborated in historical disguise is the result of resignation or even self-deception. For example, this is the case in his characterization of Hegel's ethic as having overcome the Kantian antinomies through the theoretical reproduction of the totality of bourgeois society—as if any ethic departing from, and landing in, bourgeois society could overcome Kant. Yet, it is important to stress the lingering critical dimension of Lukács' dialectic since socialists such as Isaac Deutscher have labeled him as a self-styled advocate of Stalinism, i.e., in Lukács' own terminology, its indirect apologist. During this period, however, Lukács was justified to characterize himself as a "partisan" and not a rank-and-file soldier observing military discipline. It was a very contradictory position. He always tried to reveal the system's "ideal type" as opposed to its empirical reality. This was not tolerated by the system (hence the constant conflicts between Lukács and the cultural bureaucracy), but it also meant an acceptance of the regime's basic principles, i.e., a reconciliation with reality. Such critical distance, however, was needed to elaborate his classicism and to build his personal Weimar—a cultural island among power relations unambiguously hostile toward any democratic culture.

Lukács, of course, rejected any characterization of his work in the 1930s as a "turn to Weimar" or in terms of its opposite (Potsdam). It was part of his unavoidable self-deception to believe that he had transcended both poles of German misery: that of a defenseless cultural opposition and that of the harsh reality of a partly militarized bureaucracy. However one characterizes this period, was it an evolution or a relapse when measured with the yardsticks of the 1920s? There is no unequivocal answer to this question. In terms of what was lost, the most obvious feature is precisely the reproduction in his position of the above mentioned antinomy: that of a socially impotent cultural opposition contraposed to a socially omnipotent undemocratic power

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structure. As has been pointed out by Agnes Heller, for Lukács it also meant a rejection of any *positive* philosophy, an acceptance of the official dialectical materialism, and an increasingly meaningless metaphysics—precisely what had been so vehemently rejected in *History and Class Consciousness*. Finally, it meant Lukács' loss of sensitivity to new radical cultural potentialities. A typical example of this lack of sensitivity is symbolized by his rejection of Brecht which revealed his inability to grasp really new socialist phenomena: an inevitable outcome of his repudiated radicalism. Similarly, this vehement rejection of *Proletkult*-writers (both in Russia and in the German communist movement) was entirely consistent with his new position: it meant opposition to a bureaucratic party literature—a pompous servant of an aggressive and untalented apparatus pretending to be "the voice of the masses."

One of the most relevant results of Lukács' turn to "Weimar" was the abandoning of the myth of the proletariat. The romantic anticapitalist who in his fragments of a never completed work on Dostoevsky at the outbreak of WWI elaborated an anticapitalist mythology in which the Russian idea and the Russian community provided a quasi-mystical answer to the antinomies of the capitalist world, believed he had found a concrete solution after the 1919 Hungarian revolution. He elaborated to its logical consequences one of Marx's important intellectual experiments as a consistent philosophy of fetishism based on the premise that proletarian *existence* solves the riddle of the *essence* of the whole bourgeois world. Without reconstructing the debate concerning *History and Class Consciousness*, it is sufficient here to merely point out the sociological reason that led to the theory's collapse. Firstly, that conception had to be a short-lived dream of a turbulent revolutionary period. Whenever the proletariat turned out to be one class among others (even if a central one) in the ensemble of social forces fighting for a socialist transformation, the proletarian mythology either had to be abandoned or transformed into an insincere and deliberately manipulative ideology. It is a tribute to Lukács' theoretical honesty that he chose the first alternative. Secondly, already in *History and Class Consciousness,* the proletarian mythology had been quickly transformed into a much more religious idea: the cult of the only non-fetishized social élite leading the process of defetishization because of its "correct" perspective. Aside from the fact that every comparison between theory and reality had to lead to an increasing resignation there were also immanent philosophical considerations forcing Lukács to reject this account. It was clearly religious and aristocratic: it was impossible to ground the democratic cultural ideal of a socialist Weimar on an aristocratic foundation to defend critical rationalism from a religious perspective. Although Lukács retained the elite, no longer as the principle of spiritual fulfillment, but rather as social precondition—even if a highly problematic one—this is the point of departure from which he discovered the Marx of the *Paris Manuscripts* as the universal philosopher of alienation. From this he gradually elaborated his theory of "species being," and his esthetic and literary theory which turned out to be the only one in the 30s and

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40s rejecting that "class reduction" which had been the key in the Marxist understanding of culture.

But why choose classicism? It was not the *only* choice, but one possible alternative in the almost unbearable climate of the time. One need only think of Brecht who insisted on the general validity of the language of revolution and revolutionary movement. This also provides an instructive example of the heuristic function of ideological self-deceptions since it was Brecht's easily criticizable standpoint as well as his distance from any type of "realized socialism" that helped him develop the new non-tragic drama: the immortal symbolic portrayal of the ultimate dilemmas of capitalist society. Another alternative is Bloch. His stylistic mixture of Jewish-expressionist frivolous irony and departures from the best pages of rebellious ancient and medieval mysticism truly mirrors his message: the nothingness of the present as an expression of both its insignificance and the promise of a coming redemption. This ambivalence led him to create a Marxist *Lebensphilosophie* based on hope, as a counterpart to Heidergger's tragic fundamental ontology. A third, and certainly not the last, alternative is provided in the late 40s and early 50s by Sartre: an acceptance of all personality distortions caused by alienation while driving them to their highest pitch to provoke the explosion.

All these courses made their representatives leading symbols (or theoretical supporters) of the avant garde. Yet, none of these courses was open to Lukács. Brecht, Korsch's disciple, represented for him his own past: the period of *History and Class Consciousness* that he himself had condemned. Bloch represented the religious interlude of the Dostoevsky-fragments: the "radicalism in a God-forsaken world" when he no longer believed in God-forsakenness since he had found at least a foothold from which to transcend the Fichtean "complete sinfulness" of the world. Sartre's alternative, rejected by Lukács in his early youth, seemed to him the most dangerous: it often meant the self-destruction of personality rather than its emancipation.

All this already prefigures the reason for the classicist turn. Already in his youth, as a vehement opponent of officially-accepted bourgeois culture and as a "modernist," Lukács advocated a "new constructivism." This was a monumental and tragic art of order, measure and proportionate dimensions. It was an art of palpable and visible essence, as contraposed to impressionism and naturalism which he saw as mere collections of superficial experiences. In his youth he dreamt of its advent in the form of small spiritual communities (this is what he saw in Dostoevsky). After the revolution he expected it to be realized by the proletariat. At that point, however, he was already moving towards realism. In a debate concerning genuine proletarian culture with Paul Ernst, who had been his favorite dramatist but who by the 1920s had become a militant ultraconservative, Lukács did not deny in principle the possible emergence of geniune proletarian culture as Ernst did. Yet, he was as sceptical as Trotsky about its immanent possibility. Surprisingly enough, he even referred favorably to Trotsky who was already in inner exile in Russia. The absence of a full-fledged proletarian counter-culture meant, however, a

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lack of standards since one could not use the obsolete yardsticks of bourgeois culture. This lack of standards and the demand for a new harmony is what characterizes the precarious position of the *classicist* as contraposed to the *classic* personality. While the classic or "naive" thinker simply articulates what is, the "sentimental" classicist confronts Being with Ought. The point is to transform Ought into Being. He confronts the given, degraded into mere convention, with a new cultural pattern to be transformed into nature. In this sense, Lukács was a classicist. While he was the People's Minister of Culture in the Hungarian Revolution, he formulated its program as follows: capitalism has separated culture from life and thereby contaminated both. Socialism is a way of life becoming culture or culture becoming a way of life. What is this other than the well-known program of classicism for a plebeian Weimar? To the objection that Lukács has sometimes been sentimental and naive i.e., that he actually ascribed norms while claiming to be simply "reading them off" the face of a redeemed world, one could answer that his self-deception was a typical trait of all classicists. Winckelmann also considered himself a simple "re-discoverer" of ancient harmony while in fact he was advocating a radical break with a "nature" already degraded into convention.

The first dimension of Lukács' classicism is the postulation of *ethical democracy*. His theoretical activity in the 30s and 40s focused on historical studies covering the classical era of bourgeois art and philosophy, roughly from Goethe and Schiller to the 1848 revolution. Whenever he leaves this garden of classicism, it is either in order to preserve the continuity of a national culture (e.g., German and Russian cultures) or to denounce "decadence" which is an exclusive character of the post-48 period (with the exception of Romanticism, which Lukács saw as a forerunner of decadence). These essays are small moral biographies dealing with typical personality distortions to be overcome or with paradigmatic attitudes to be generalized in an emancipated future—which explains why so many aestheticians are dissatisfied with their pure aesthetic quality: they are actually preludes to a never completed ethics. The emphasis is on the paradigmatic and the text always suggests that the discovery of the emancipatory message of classical bourgeois culture became possible only after an already existing order had generalized all the fruitful types of behavior elaborated by its forerunner, the progressive bourgeoisie. In view of the old Lukács' bitter criticism, it is very difficult to establish how much of this alleged methodological precondition stemmed from tactical camouflage merely paying lip-service to an almighty and not extremely tolerant bureaucracy and how much from self-deception. What is important is that the method is actually the opposite: departing from a vague ideal of a socialist-humanist classicism in the early thirties which becomes increasingly more concrete in the process, Lukács selects and orders the paradigmatic types of attitudes that *ought to be* generalized in the socialist future.

Following Marx, Lukács' writings are full of invectives against mere formal democracy. From the early thirties on he articulated the notion of the "new

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democracy" and later that of "people's democracy" (Lukács legitimately considered himself one of the forerunners of the Comintern's 1934 tactical turn to the Popular Front). Whenever he tried to articulate this conception politically, the result was lamentable: it amounted to reproposing the old pattern. Thus, such a democracy was not new and hardly a democracy at all. This is the price the "partisan" has to pay for accepting military discipline. Yet, within this account, there is a philosophical proposal on how to overcome mere formal democracy without abolishing but rather preserving the democratic framework of life. Time and again, Lukács' quest for "genuine" democracy appears as a relapse into the romanticism of *The Theory of Novel.* One need only consider how much he emphasized the moral superiority of the Scottish clans in Walter Scott's novel and the presence of a peasant community in Russian literature (his real motive, of course, was to elevate Russian development as a whole to the rank of a classical culture). At other times, "genuine" democracy appears as a small island of sophisticated individuals as in, e.g., the analysis of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister.* His best account of "genuine" democracy however, is the essay on Gottfried Keller, which fully reveals his intentions. Keller's Switzerland can become the model country of "genuine" democracy because it has not yet been fully penetrated by capitalism. This, however, is not a romantic nostalgia since Lukács expressly states that this type of democracy can and should be projected into a free future. This yields the first important result: the separation of what Hegel and the young Marx called "*bürgerliche Gesellschaft*" and capitalism. "Genuine" democracy is not the offspring of capitalism which generates only "formal" democracy. "Genuine democracy" is historically prior to capitalism and can thus also be hypostatized as subsequent to it. The characteristic feature of "genuine" democracy is that is does not accept the total separation of people and institutions. Of course, this is the age-old dream of every attempt to revive Greek antiquity: it was made "the order of the day" by the radical wing of Jacobinism. Lukács, however, did not bother to analyze concretely the pertinent Rousseauean dilemma: whether and how a huge social body could be governed by direct democracy. Nevertheless, the free atmosphere in which Keller's heroes move radiates an idea of self-governed mankind: a regulative theoretical idea without which socialism is impossible. In Keller's society there is a state, institutions and public affairs, so that direct democracy is not a mystical dream of eliminating mediations. Yet, there is no state repression, no fear of institutions and no feeling that institutions are alien to the average citizen's will. Furthermore, there is a self-assurance that institutions are man's free creations, and not reified and unalterable structures. Thus, they are subject to changes as a result of human initiatives. Similarly, the separation of the private from the public sphere becomes relative. In this respect, Lukács' essays prefigure the *Oeffentlichkeit* emphasized by Habermas. When Lukács points out in every "normal" family life the importance of the education of true citizens (one of Keller's most serious subject matters) thereby eliminating the unbridgeable gap between

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citoyen and *bourgeois*, and Habermas emphasizes the intimate sphere of the bourgeois family as the only possible substitute for the *Oeffentlichkeit*, both reject the Hegelian position according to which the individual is not the product of the family but rather of bourgeois society in the narrow sense of the world, i.e., of the system of laws, the state and moral regulation. Where Hegel only reverses the normal hierarchy predominant in capitalism while retaining its dichotomy, both Lukács and Habermas set out to eliminate this type of alienation. Moreover, the Lukácsian conception of education for public life, an absolutely general feature of Keller's world, is not simply identical with civil liberties. It points beyond this and grows into a general social dynamic of communication free of domination (to use Habermas' terminology): a constitutive principle of (socialist) ethical democracy by which equals share the language of freedom and equality. The famous scene frequently mentioned by Lukács in which Keller's beloved hero, the "green" Heinrich, is reprimanded by his lover for "plebeian haughtiness" towards a girl he believed to be a countess but who was actually a poor relative, points this out: that communication free of domination is incompatible with class prejudices of *any* kind.

"Geniune" democracy is also a world of communal-collective ethics. It is the opposite of subjective morality which was the constant focus of Lukács' incomplete and unresolved theoretical struggle for a new ethic. Over time, he articulated three different solutions. Although he was then a neo-Kantian, in his prerevolutionary youth he never understood the deeply democratic character of Kantian ethics. Thus, he proposed two contradictory solutions. The first was an aristocratic Kierkegaardian metaethic and the second, developed during the revolutionary upheavals of WWI, was a democratic but mystical solution: the "Russian spiritual community" understood as a world of collective love with moral principles, but without any alien Ought. It is not difficult to see why the first had to be abandoned after the revolution because of its aristocratic character, and the second because of its mysticism. His position in the 1920s is best summarized in *Tactics and Ethics*. The collective dimension is smuggled in as already existing. It is the "correct" history of philosophy plus a subjective principle: consciousness. Apart from the fact that if one has the "correct" standard there is no longer any need for the subjective principle, the whole Hegelian framework stands or falls with the existence or non-existence of the assumed proletarian consciousness.

After he gave up any illusions concerning that consciousness, he still insisted that Kantian morality could be transcended. Thus, he had to find a new solution: "genuine" or "ethical" democracy. But the functioning of a democracy within a public sphere characterized by communication free of domination requires a collective morality, the abolition of the moral dichotomy of the private and public sphere, the existence of well-defined and generally accepted internalized norms. Similarly, communication free of domination is a process of education to collective morality. This is why a pedagogical principle plays such an extraordinary role in Lukács' thinking.

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The educational novel and the notion of "moral apprenticeship" become decisive in his literary essays. A deep optimism underlies the whole conception: a growing conviction that tragedy can be overcome. His anti-Heideggerian work on *Faust* already emphasizes that the leading principle of the historical development is the "epic" and not the "tragedy." The essays on Goethe and Keller (and, in the last phase of his life, the wonderful study on Lessing's Minna von Barnhelm) focus on the importance of "moral cleverness." This is a way of life that does not avoid conflicts but does not provoke the tragic crowning of one's life. What all this means is not only a rupture with the Kierkegaardian phase of his youth, but also with the moral Jacobinism of the 20s.

But Lukács' conception of the collective morality of ethical democracy may be self-contradictory. As Agnes Heller has pointed out, his central moral category is the moral personality which internalizes norms so that there is no need for independently given and external moral demands. In a certain sense, this resembles the age-old dream of the free agent of moral action accepting no authority imposed from above. Rather, he looks rationally at his fellow creatures who look back in a similarly rational way—certainly an heretical and rebellious idea during Stalin's era. Yet, it is an ambiguous position. The free agent acts "as if" the norms no longer existed as external forces since they are totally internalized. But how can we grasp them before internalization or, what is more important, how can we grasp their precise content? This is why decency (*Tüchtigkeit*) plays such an extraordinary role in the characterization of heroes of the literary essays. Those who are morally "in order" and know "instinctively" how to behave in precarious situations, are decent. Of course, one may detect an Aristotelian element here: decency is very reminiscent of the old-fashioned "virtue" of the city-state without a detailed inventory of the particular virtues. This only shows that Lukács could not solve (not even with the "auxiliary construction" of ethical democracy) the perennial dilemma of modern morality: how to unify the formal principle of morality (the unspecified moral demand) with material ethics, and to what an extent.

The last dimension of ethical democracy to be discussed is its *pluralistic structure*. Clearly, great paradigmatic personalities such as Goethe, who in a true classicist spirit shape and order the world, are always given. (Thus, he wanted to write a book on Goethe's life, but the preparatory material for this book was confiscated during his arrest in 1941 and never returned.) Yet, Goethe, the canon for *modern* times, pronounced the verdict: all men together constitute humanity. So the correct moral decision is a modified version of the Aristotelean mean: not something that requires *one* correct deed, but a whole field of equally acceptable acts. Lukács' ethics is not as inflexible as his epistemology. Whether one examines the analyses of writers or those of their heroes, there is always an ethical pluralism. Though Goethe is the paragon, the central demi-god of the classicist Olympus is Pushkin who is Goethe's equal and sometimes even his superior because of his incomparably more resolute commitment. Political commitment is a virtue in

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itself. Yet, it may also result in narrow-minded bias, as in the case of Börne, or, if the writer's politics is badly chosen, it may precipitate the collapse of the whole framework even more than the lack of any political commitment, as in the case of Gogol in his late creative period. His ideal is the writer who courageously defends his artistic principles and political priorities, while remaining active in the public sphere, e.g., Lessing. Yet, he is not only indulgent toward Goethe's constant compromises, but he shows an exceptional tolerance for Heine's petty weaknesses, and Dostoevsky's overtly anti-revolutionary ideology. This happens in all cases when the unbroken emancipatory will is demonstrated by the *oeuvre* which functions as a corrective principle over personalities and ideologies. In Lukács' pluralistic ethic, when it comes to judgment, what counts are objectifications and not subjective aspirations.

To the objection that the evaluation of great artists need not necessarily indicate ethical pluralism since the real basis of moral multidimensionality is not the pluralistic viewpoint but the writers' *oeuvre* (i.e., a non-moral basis of moral judgment), one need only examine Lukács' analyses of the heroes in the educational novels where there is no fixed role of the educator and everyone in a given moral context can be both educator and educated. Thus, in *Wilhelm Meister*, Philine, a charming and irresponsible young tramp, is elevated by Lukács to the rank of the bearer of *amor dei intellectualis*, and in the Keller novels and short stories illiterate housewives, artisans and especially women turn out to be "decent" in the previously defined sense, as opposed to the cultivated heroes who are in need of "critique from below." Needless to say, this is a realization of the Marxian maxim that the educator should be educated, i.e., a democratic and pluralistic abolition of the rigid Enlightenment dichotomy. Similarly, Lukács' moral analysis constantly relativizes the greatness of the Overman. It is not just the petty individualist gloating in his own greatness that is exposed to ruthless critique. The really great heroes are just as mercilessly unmasked and driven through an educational purgatory (e.g., Faust) until they find their way to a program of collective emancipation, or are unambiguously rejected by Lukács along with all the Byronian supermen of romanticism. While he never denies their greater stature as compared to the "humble ones," he does not consider a satisfactory ground to locate them higher on the moral scale. Finally, even among those who resist the expansion of capital and are "partisans" like him there is no single "correct" mode of resistance.

Thus, in spite of the rejection of the political radicalism of the 20s, the shift to "ethical" democracy meant a more profound radicalization. Of course, he shared the political weakness of his idol, Goethe, i.e., paying constant lip-service to a power-structure that showed far less predilection for cultural development than some of Goethe's masters. Similarly he constantly confounded Ought with Being so that nowadays he is open to bitter and not entirely unfounded attacks. But the ethical Ought was a radical one. It demanded that a world commensurate to the free-collective ethic be

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created—a non-authoritarian, pluralistic world of ethical democracy without moral or any other tyranny: a public sphere free of domination.

The second dimension of Lukács' classicism concerns *the supremacy of reason*. To take a stand on the side of rationalism was absolutely crucial in the 30s and 40s,—the irrationalism *par excellence*. Neither Adorno and Horkheimer, nor Popper could avoid this confrontaton. The Frankfurt School's intellectual trajectory reached its climax with *The Dialectic of the Enlightenment*. Here Lukács' earlier *leitmotif*, the interpretation of rationalism as the "spirit of capitalism" (a point of departure for the whole Frankfurt School's *Kulturkritik* which they constantly exploited but hardly ever acknowledge) is turned into a real philosophical perversion. It is precisely reason at its highest point that is put on trial for having given dialectical birth to its counterpart, irrationalism. It is not just the self-deceptions of bourgeois rationalism that are criticized but the whole effort to rationalize the world. Although the critique of cultural fetishism remains (and even produces masterpieces such as Adorno's philosophy of music), it is the voice of an impotent opposition which, along with every theory of fetishism, becomes ever more aristocratic. Popper, on the other hand, holds firm in advocating the claims of critical reason. The "irrational" choice of the theory's leading value, that of cumulative knowledge (a choice that cannot be established rationally so that the theory must be critical even towards its own foundations) defends rationalism both against *all* forms of mythologically legitimated totalitarianism and reason's own ambitions. But Popper's simplistic sociology of the "open society and its enemies" and the reduction of once totalizing reason into the restricted context of the accumulation of knowledge (Popper considers any other program either nonsensical or as a deliberately manipulative totalitarian ideology) displays a resignation with regard to the chances of reason in history similar to that of the Frankfurt School.

Unlike both Adorno and Popper, from the 30s to his death Lukács' rationalism is characterized by an optimistic spirit—which is very consistent with his classicism. All the flourishing period of European classicism developed within the context of a concrete stage of rationalism: 17th century French classicism under the impact of Descartes; early 18th century British classicism—the age of Swift, Pope and Addison—under the influence of Locke; and Weimar as the heir to French enlightenment and a student of Kant (even if occasionally in vehement polemics with the master). Thus, Lukács was not without predecessors when in *The Destruction of Reason*, he placed Marx, the rationalist *par excellence*, at the center of the epic battle between reason and unreason.

Another reason why Lukács came to subscribe to a universal rationalism was that every theory of action not based on convention or on a consciously accepted faith must be grounded on a rationalist principle. Despite the collapse of his philosophy in the 20s, Lukács always remained a philosopher of praxis. This follows not only from his polemics against the separation of *vita*

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contemplativa from *vita activa*, the hereditary sin of traditional humanism or the opposition of the "narrating" realist and the merely "describing" naturalist, but from the very core of his classicist ideal: ethical democracy. As a value, ethical democracy had to be defended against the various tyrannies and irrationalist mythologies, and had to be generalized. Both defense and generalization are principles of action.

A closer look at Lukács' rationalism during the 30s and 40s, reveals that this principle central to all his literary and philosophical debates, and in whose name he denounced almost all of German culture during the last two centuries, is a postulate rather than a theory. It certainly was *not dialectical reason* contraposed to his positive philosophy of the 1920s. There, a coherent theory of the abolition of reification and of the subject-object dichotomy had been developed against the rationalism of the antinomies. Elements of the previous framework were "smuggled in" the new period, e.g., the concept of alienation (primarily in *The Young Hegel*), that of unequal development, and the increasingly meaningless category of the totality which had a clear-cut profile in *History and Class Consciousness* as the outcome of totalizing reason. Until the *Ontology*, however, these categories remained fragments and he never even attempted to relate them within one coherent body.

Perhaps more problematic in Lukács during this period is the "bad naiveté" underlying his principle of rationalism. In theorizing about reason as such he remains unperturbed by the futile efforts of at least two generations of thinkers to resolve the dilemmas of Cartesian rationalism and its Kantian renewal and to establish a scientific knowledge of society. Moreover, for Lukács it became an indication of theoretical inferiority to regard reason not as something *given* but rather as something *to be construed*. The source of Lukács naiveté lies in the positing of the new consensus of ethical democracy as something actually existing: as a medium from which the synthetic principles of a new rationalism could simply be deduced. The naive premise involved a two-fold self-deception: not only was ethical democracy an Ought, a normative ideal founded in a "sentimental" world-view, but it also became in the Lukácsian formulation a world without real synthetical rules, bonds and norms, and based exclusively on moral personality.

The categories of this very vague concept of rationalism include the possibility of knowledge of the world in the real sense of epistemology, a theory of fetishism as the critique of ideology, and a universal concept of evolution as its philosophy of history. Lukács' epistemology is a curious mixture of Hegelian logic (especially the problematic dialectic of the concept from its abstract beginnings to the final concrete content). Here one should bear in mind that Lukács' epistemology never meant to compete either with Sartre's epistemological attempts nor with experiments initiated by Husserl to create a new Marxist theory of knowledge. The rationalism to which Lukács adhered proclaimed the possibility of objective knowledge in defiance of relativism and agnosticism. Here, however, we bear witness to a peculiar

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contradiction with far-reaching consequences. It is precisely the vagueness of Lukács epistemology which makes it vulnerable to an authoritarian character. A social science based on such ambiguity must ultimately become susceptible to the kind of critique against "science" as reification which Lukács himself articulated during the 20s. The already existing tendency to use the natural sciences exclusively as the model from which to derive criteria of true knowledge reflects the same epistemological authoritarianism of which Lukács is ultimately guilty. Truth and, what is more, a "single" truth exists with regard to each epistemological constellation. Lukács formulates this principle in the maxim that there are an infinite number of ways leading to falsity, but only one leading to truth. The notion of the homebound Hegelian World Spirit, as the bearer of the riddle of history recurs in Lukács' theory, thereby creating an irreconcilable discrepancy between the pluralism of ethical democracy and the monolithism of its epistemology.

The two remaining components of Lukácsian rationalism, namely the theory of fetishism and evolutionism are only "auxiliary constructions" on which his *classicist anthropology* is founded. The epistemological optimism is rooted in the belief in man as the indestructibly rational being (the Kantian *Vernunfstwesen*) able to attain knowledge of himself and the world. Causality and its contingent laws are self-evident since man is a free agent. The theory of fetishism becomes necessary to explain the partial loss of clear self-knowledge and breach of harmony within the personality; thus fetishism functions as a "diagnostic category" in Lukács' rationalism. Evolutionism is an indispensable framework for the notion of man being capable of constant development and equipped with an inexhaustible reservoir of potentialities. Finally, Lukács' classicism must be interpreted as a form of resistance against demonology in the era of Hitler and Stalin. Indeed, it became an irrevocable philosophical task to defend the birthright of free personality as a product of activity within the framework of a genuine democracy, to defend the unity of the personality against its disintegration, to advocate the principles of personal and social harmony and substantiality in an age characterized by the shallowness and amorphous quality of human personality. Thus, classicist anthropology signified the principle of hope just as Bloch's prophecies.

In its proclamation of the unquestionable and unproblematic supremacy of reason over our whole personality structure, Lukács' classicism revealed a naiveté reminiscent of the most over-confident periods of the Enlightenment. In this sense Lukács may be called the Anti-Freud: the theoretician of the "pure" Ego for whom the whole problematic of the Id ("psychological character" as opposed to moral character) is dismissed with a single gesture. A constant character trait of Lukács since his youth recurs here, namely the hatred of psychology as an empirical branch of learning incapable of adequately explaining the "soul" (later the substantial personality). An adequate methodology, in Lukács' opinion, would consist essentially in repressing or ignoring one's psychological past. Here Lukács is influenced significantly by Makarenko's pedagogical principle. In its application to literary analysis, this

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anti-psychological principle engenders the notion that writers essentially do not have biographies and that this very lack becomes an obstacle to understanding art.

It is interesting to study Lukács' conception of the counterpart of reason. He often writes of "instincts" in a very vague and illogical manner, as, for instance, with regard to writers such as Kleist who have "degenerate" reactionary instincts or with regard to such literary figures as the wife of Petepre in the Joseph trilogy, who is possessed by fascist "instincts." It becomes clear that "instinct" here is nothing akin to Id (in the sense of a genetically given particular psychological framework), but refers rather to counter-principles, i.e., a rational substrate with irrational content. The same mythological battle between reason and unreason in the personality structure is encountered in the history of ideas dealt with in *The Destruction of Reason*. While both protagonists are "products of reason," only one of them may claim that rank. Unreason, then, is not simply identical with non-reason, nor is it a justifiably separate domain, but merely the duplication of the same sphere: whatever is rational at that level (though not rational ideologically) is degraded to the level of the "merely instinctual" and becomes a symbol of the "underworld."

The upshot of Lukácsian classicism, then, is the tyranny of reason. It is an enlightened and liberal tyranny, to be sure, as Lukács not only concedes the right of existence to emotional life, but ascribes a central importance to it. In his doctrine, the "culture of feelings" is one of the key concepts. Moreover, one of the central issues of his vehement anti-Kant polemic was the decline of the world of "affects" in Kant and an ensuing inhuman rigor in Kant's morality. (One finds that *The Young Hegel* and the essay on Schiller's aesthetic theory contain detailed analyses of this). *In principle*, Lukács' theory allows for the decisive role of "non-reason" (emotions, affects, etc.), but he fails to articulate this role precisely. Lukács resolves the mind-body dualism in such a way that mind (*ratio*) does not simply rule over "body" (the ambiguous domain of "non-reason"), but the "non-mental" dimension is absorbed by the mental. (A characteristic example of the subjection of body to mind is his almost Victorian concept of sexuality and eroticism.) Thus, the idea of the democratic and stoic sage, a sublime but aristocratic prototype best characterized by an attitude of tolerant condescension toward his own corporeality recurs often in Lukács' writings. Of course, there are exceptions to be found in the Lukácsian analyses in a series of *emotionally* cultivated women—Minna von Barnhelm, Goethe's Philine, Keller's Judith, who, though intellectually inferior to the male protagonists "instinctively" fulfill the role of the moral censor in conflict situations. The predominantly female "culture of feelings" represents a more dynamic type of rationality which requires no overt ideological formulation. The most striking example of the arrogance of reason is Lukács' conception of man's confrontation with death. Apart from absurd statements inspired by propagandistic literature ("it is only the decadent bourgeoisie that dreads death"), one finds a consistently

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unilinear rationalist conception according to which death becomes the continuation of the conduct of life chosen by the dying person. Certainly the anti-Heideggerian aspect of this Lukácsian thesis is noteworthy. It is life that dominates us, not death. We live for our lives, not in and for our coming death. Lukács as the sage of renewed Stoicism was certainly not the man plagued by anxiety. But there are limits even to the most vehement rationalism. Sartre was right in stating: "Death is not my last possibility, but the annihilation of my possibilities."

The most promising and at the same time problematic feature of Lukács' classicist anthropology is the dichotomy between sanity and disease. The normative distinction between these becomes one of the dominating tendencies of our age, that is, the substitution of psychology for morality and moral judgment. We find a whole catalogue of social maladies in Lukács: fanaticism, the bureaucratic spirit, egomania, etc., all of which Lukács recognizes as diseases, just as he recognizes the Marxian *aperçu* that not only the oppressed but also the oppressors *suffer* from alienation. Suffering is shown here as disease, as a distortion of the personality. We also encounter the world of the sane or the rehabilitated. The line of demarcation between sanity and disease is too sharply drawn and thus problematic. The contraposition of the sane and the ill leaves no room for communication.

Lukács' theory of realism can only be understood in light of his rationalism, particularly as it is actually a critique of fetishism. The theory's protagonist is the "defetishized" realist who sees through the veils of reification, who penetrates appearances to arrive at their essences. Lukács' theory spoke in defense of *order* and *coherence* against irrationalism and the disintegration of personality, in defense of the free rational personality, the *Vernunftswesen* opposed to the morality and personality structure shaped by dictatorship. His theory of realism revives the concept of totality: defetishization is not merely an epistemological act, its meaning is not limited to "understanding the whole." Totality is labor and the product of labor: the "substantial" individuality. The man of essence elaborates the whole raw material of the world of appearance and is not only "grasping the whole," but is an embodiment and positive result of the totalizing efforts themselves.

The Lukácsian theory of realism could not become the basis for a radical new art. On the contrary, it was vehemently rejected not only by conservative artists, but also by the majority of representatives of the radical avantgarde. The controversies, beginning with the early expressionism debate (between Lukács on one side and Bloch, Eisler, etc. on the other), to the irritated reactions on the part of German writers in exile to the more recent attacks of Adorno or Enzensberger are so well-documented that no further elaboration is necessary. The anti-Lukács polemic has been directed against his concept of decadence, the legacy of Marx himself, who declared the whole era of developed capitalism as being hostile to poetry and art in general. According to Marx, after the revolutions of 1830 and especially of 1848, and after the rise of the proletariat as a self-conscious factor, the ability of the bourgeoisie is

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exhausted. It is curious to observe that nearly all those who mercilessly attacked Lukács for his "conservative" theory of decadence and who accused him of ignorance either of modern art or the "professorial" or "academic" spirit, themselves developed various theories of decadence. In his *L'Idiot de la famille*, Sartre concurs with Marx and Lukács in pin-pointing the negative turn in bourgeois literature. For him, the June uprising of the French proletariat marked the rupture after which artists who are "normally" and not "neurotically" bourgeois could only join in the decline. Nor is Adorno any more tolerant than Lukács toward most modern music and the audiences, whom he simply labels as "regressive listeners." If we take a close look at Adorno's analysis of Stravinsky, or Sartre's analyses of Leconte de Lisle, the differences in rigor are relativized. Clearly our age is too deeply problematic not to be judged. Lukács' unique position among his contemporaries consisted not in being a judge of his age, but rather in the fact that his verdict was comprehensive. We find autobiographical elements in the Lukácsian portrait of Georg Forster, the German radical who, in his profound moral contempt for his own age, condemned as inferior the whole of contemporary art. Emphasis should be placed on the word "radical," since Lukács' concept of decadence was not the "academic" standpoint of a scholar active in the literary salons of the 19th century, but rather a radical and simultaneously aristocratic position.

Its radical character needs little elaboration, for a polemic that denies the right of existence to a cultural period is by definition radical. This is especially true, inasmuch as Lukács adheres to the Marxian definition of radicalism. He grasps the cultural malaise, the "disease" of alienated man, at its roots. What appears to be more problematic is an explanation of how a radicalism with leftist-democratic values can be regarded as aristocratic. That peculiar marriage of opposites cannot be explained without an understanding of Lukács' theory of realism as a theory of fetishism. It has repeatedly been pointed out that all theories of fetishism imply an inevitable aristocratic aspect. The ability to see through the fetishized universe of others and to pronounce an indictment of fetishized consciousness on others requires that the theorist occupy an aristocratic, that is, an allegedly non-fetishistic, position. Lukács has always readily assumed the role of judge, because an authoritarian streak was intrinsic to his intellectual physiognomy and his rationalist epistemology assumed monolithic proportions. First and foremost, however, the reason lies in his conception of the world of ethical democracy as Being and not as Ought. This view allegedly granted him an Archimedean point, a non-fetishistic position from which he believed himself able to overlook the whole domain of fetishization with an undistorted glance. For this reason the Lukácsian theory of realism, his radical rejection of the whole existing culture, had to exhibit an aristocratic character.

The first of these aristocratic features was its *essentialism*. As is well known, the Lukácsian criterion for artistic realism rests on the decisive question of whether art adheres to the surface world of appearances or whether it is able

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to penetrate the realm of essence. Apart from various dilemmas intrinsic to all attempts at pseudo-theological ontologization of appearance and essence as two spheres, this approach causes a specific problem in the case of art. The determination of what is "essential," as opposed to what is merely "apparent" in a novel, a painting or a symphony makes necessary the introduction of a non-aesthetic, alien principle in the assessment of aesthetic formations. This alien, external principle stems from Lukács' classicist *anthropology*: "essential" signifies everything that characterized the substantial man of ethical democracy—both in structure and content. It is possible to establish definitely whether a work of art transcended a flat and superficial verisimilitude—particularly in literature and the fine arts; music, which relies on an "artificial language," raises different problems. The question as to whether art creates its "own world," though highly relevant, is one which cannot always be answered with certainty. The judgment as to whether the world constructed by art transcends the sphere of the merely apparent can only result from arbitration and cannot claim the epistemological objectivity of the Lukácsian theory. A striking example of this is Lukács' relation to Kafka. Because of Kafka's insistence on a hopeless *condition humaine* and predilection for allegory, Lukacs could not include the former among the elect representatives of the "triumph of realism." Unable on the other hand to conceal an admiration for Kafka's artistic genius, however, Lukács emphasizes Kafka's distance from what may be regarded as "surface" or the "merely apparent." This, in turn, means that Kafka created an "essential" sphere, thus fulfilling the absolute criterion of realistic art. Since, however, Kafka's "essential sphere" unmistakably represents a pseudo-transcendence of modern religious need, it is immediately labelled by Lukács as being only "pseudo-essential." Judgment, previously referred to as a matter of arbitration, is actually based on arbitrary principle. The theory of realism is a consistently aristocratic theory of fetishism: there must be an elite situated at a given non-fetishistic Archimedean point from which to determine whether the work in question has an "essential," i.e., realistic, character and whether the "essential sphere" is genuine or merely pseudo-essential. If at times the character of this elite seems doubtful, or assumes an institutional-censorial shape, these were historically conditioned effects independent of Lukács' intentions. The essentialist principle of Lukácsian realism was aristocratic, even without its censors. If in Walter Benjamin's aesthetics the recipient was constitutive to the very existence of the work of art, this function of the recipient in the Lukácsian theory of realism is assumed by the arbiter-critic.

A special epistemological apparatus adjoins the essentialist conception, namely, Lukács' theory of reflection. This theory rests on concepts that cannot withstand the most superficial scrutiny. We must ask: what is the subject and the appropriate organ of reflection? If we considered the brain of a creative artist to be this organ, then we are confronted with numerous epistemological-methodological dilemmas. The first of these unsurmountable dilemmas is that every real mirror is a non-selective medium; a non-selective

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brain, however, is the brain of an imbecile. An additional problem is the following: if the central organ or subject of reflection ("mirroring") is the brain, i.e., the intellect of the artist, then a theory of realism centering around works of art and not the artistic personality would immediately collapse. Were the theory consistent with itself, it would have to be transformed into a kind of psychology of art. The final dilemma arises in the attempts to posit the isolated brain or artistic intellect in confrontation with the world. By so formulating the conditions for epistemology we relapse into an atomistic, pre-Marxian framework. This was clearly not the intention of reflection theory.

The adherents of reflection theory would immediately object that the "reflecting brain" had been conceived from the very beginning as being selective, as an *organon* that accomplishes the transition from appearance to essence. One need only recall Lukács' violent polemics against "mechanists" who identify the reflecting brain with a camera. But a "selective" mirror is clearly no mirror at all, but rather a metaphor for dialectical reason. However, dialectical reason comprises a collective epistemological entity and historical achievement, and is an objectification that cannot be attributed to any mind as an inborn trait.

Lukács used this overly metaphorical concept of the dialectic-selective "mirror" certainly not owing to any lack of intellectual distinction, since men of philosophical genius, whether well-versed in logic or not, never lack this capacity. His dilemma arises from the necessity of accepting a collective subject he wanted to avoid. For Lukács during a previous period, dialectical reason as "true knowledge" was exclusively and inextricably tied to one collective subject: the proletariat. (In this light *History and Class Consciousness* actually opposed reflection theory and did not need any epistemology in the proper sense of the word.) That Lukács overcame this conception and no longer bound the fate of genuine artistic creation to one class is indicative of an evolution on his part. In other words, Lukács rejected the technique of class reduction shared by both adherents and opponents of reflection theory. It was only Lucien Goldmann who created an aesthetics commensurate with *History and Class Consciousness*, that is, a structuralist sociology of art based on classes. The Lukácsian solution was to accept the admittedly metaphorical concept of the "dialectical mirror" and to place the artist with his special capacity of *Wesensschau*, of breaking through appearance to essence, in the center of the theory. This position was, on the one hand, compatible with the general anthropology of Lukácsian classicism: the artist seemed to be the paragon of man in his evolution from appearance to substantiality. On the other hand, this solution allowed for the arbitrariness of his theory of realism: the strictly formal category of essence could be given any content agreeable to the theoretician. It was characteristic of Lukács' uncompromising theoretical rigor that he could not let "essence" be empty and formal, devoid of content in the sense of "Kantianism" or "formalism." A solution Lukács might have reached during the 1920s consists

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in the following: essence, defined as class-content, determines that the only essential art is one that portrays the existence of the proletariat. Since he had relinquished this solution, he adopted one of the most contradictory and most problematic features of Marxist sociology—that of base and superstructure. This idea was applied to his understanding of literature in such a way that superstructure became identical with appearance and base with essence. The identification, though never theoretically formulated, had been traditionally accepted. The identification of essence with "base" occasionally led Lukács to such blunders as his essay on Balzac's *Peasants*, in which he elevates an exceptionally bad novel to the rank of a masterpiece. That particular essay, however, had major consequences. The first was that Lukács had to confine his literary investigations to the classical bourgeois period (between the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 20th century). Not only Greek antiquity, but also Renaissance art remained perforce absent from his field of vision, since Lukács expressly maintained that historical materialism in the strict sense of the word was exclusively the principle for understanding capitalist society in its pure form. With all due consideration to critical sociological and economic remarks regarding Marxian theory, it was reasonable—though one-sided—to describe that historical period by the reduction of all social phenomena to the economic base. After this period, however, and especially after World War I, an ever-increasing part of "intellectual production" (that part of the superstructure deliberately turned against its "capitalist base") and the social status of "intellectual producers" changed radically. As a consequence, the Lukácsian way of interpretation lost much of its original relevance. Where, if not in a society "reduced to the base," would a theory of fetishism be adequate? Under what conditions, except those shaped by a general reductionism, would the Marxian thesis of personal relations as object relations hold true? A situation changed in its structural being requires new modes of interpretation, and Lukács' inability to grasp structural change decisively obstructed him in developing an appropriate approach to modern art. The final consequence thus becomes obvious: had he expanded his theory of realism to a general aesthetics, the whole "reductionism" and identification of "essence" with "base" would have had to be abandoned. While literature confined to a limited space and approximate results could be understood according to a "reductionist" theory, art in general could by no means be appreciated in the same manner.

The third aristocratic feature of Lukács' theory of realism was its complete disregard for the recipient. Lukács' motifs, in particular his life-long contempt for the bourgeois "audience," are for their radical quality akin to Brecht's morphology of theater audiences fulfilling only entertainment purposes. In his youth, Lukács at least ascribed a negative importance to the audience, although he deduced the decline of dramatic forms directly from that type of spectator. A deeper philosophical consideration forced Lukács to discard the recipient in the midst of the rise of the theory of realism during the 1930s and 1940s. The recipient as a phenomenological figure in

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understanding art was inextricably bound to everyday life. The principal categories essential to the reception of art included the suspension of daily activities, the transformation of "the whole man" into the "human whole," etc. The necessary emergence out of everyday life implied here, however, could only be temporary. Both the need for art (ontologically prior to works of art and a basic constituent function of the recipient) and the gratified return of the recipient as a result of aesthetic pleasure indicate that the recipient remains confined within everyday life. But the "sphere" of the everyday for a theory of fetishism logically must have been one that was to be transcended as the domain of the merely apparent. Lukács' essays of the 1930s, in particular those in the volume *The Problems of Realism,* are full of invectives against the "naturalist cult of the everyday," naturalist being synonymous here with modern art in general.

Thus a contradiction intrinsic to Lukács' theory could not be overcome. On the one hand, it was a postulate of theory itself that everyday life as the domain of the fetishistic audience had to be transcended. On the other hand, the ethical democracy that Lukács posited as Being required that art be accessible to everybody—that it be "popular" art in the modern sense of the word. The Lukácsian charges against the "unintelligible" character of modern art, his brusque rejection of certain literary and artistic techniques on the grounds that the "people" would not be able to digest it, stemmed from the constant but hidden presence of ethical democracy in his theory. In such a situation, the saying holds true that you can't have your cake and eat it, too. To demand a grandiose "popular" art and simultaneously uproot the foundations from which it could develop inevitably resulted in a theoretical deadlock.

Stalin's death caused an almost radical change in Lukács' political and aesthetic position. It was no real radicalization, for the change evolved slowly and very gradually in the midst of reverberations upon antirealism. Nor was the change radical in the sense of being a return to his Jacobinism and the monolithic class-position of the 1920s; in fact, it never implied either a radical political or aesthetic renouncement of the premises that had guided him since the Hungarian Revolution of 1919. Rather, it was a growing but ambivalent theoretical militancy engendered by three complexes. The first of these was the shock (as the aftermath of the 20th Congress) of the forceful confrontation with Stalin's real legacy, one that left no room for the "partisan" and for seeking an "ideal type" within the system. Even if Lukács did not for a moment abandon his basic prinicples or his existential choice, he had to give up his "reconciliation with reality," for the task was not to find Stalin's ideal type but to rebuild his legacy as a minimal reform program. The second complex was constituted by ever more intensive social struggles, both in Eastern and Western Europe, that coincided with anti-Stalinist social activity in Eastern Europe. The first signs of a new anti-capitalist subject appeared on the scene: a fairly pluralistic subject that incorporated both what we call now the "New Left" and "Eurocommunism." The partisan's

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feeling of icy isolation and the concomitant social paralysis were vanishing; as a consequence, new elements of activity could have been introduced to the theory. As a third complex, the all-encompassing alternative of rationalism versus irrationalism collapsed—almost inevitably as neither modern capitalism nor Stalinism could have been functionally described by it. New categories moved into the forefront of Lukács' thinking.

This resulted in a contradictory position, in what Lukács would have called in his dialectical vocabulary, a "fertile contradiction": on the one hand, when the program for reform was politically drafted as a result of the 20th Congress, the self-deception with regard to the "Ought-or-Being-character" of ethical democracy disappeared and the realization of socialism as an ethical democracy clearly appeared as a *task*. What was termed previously as the introduction of dimensions of activity into the theory was facilitated by the fact, mentioned above, that the new "subjective factors," even if undeveloped, appeared in the Lukácsian field of vision. On the other hand, however, Lukács' growing resignation toward political revolution and his rigidity with regard to "ultimate principles" caused the active elements to assume an exclusively educational-aesthetic character. The consummation of his practical-theoretical efforts in this period and the crowning work of his classicism, namely, *The Specificity of the Aesthetic*, was an unambiguous renewal of the Schillerian "aesthetic education of mankind."

Of course, for Lukacs this was a most problematic position to adopt as he had been the most vehement critic of this characteristically German social misery since Marx: the ensemble of high-falutin aesthetic programs for lack of social alternatives. Clearly this was the price he had to pay for having remained captive to his original premises. This contradiction intrinsic to Lukács has been emphasized often, but the whole truth about him in the mid-1950s to the early 1960s cannot be exhausted by such a curt verdict. The fact that Thomas Mann enthusiastically praised Lukács in a letter on the occasion of the latter's 70th birthday for having been the constant advocate of the principle of European culture in communism, has often been debunked by certain ultra-radicals as a mere exchange of compliments between effete bourgeois aesthetes. We must consider the Lukácsian mission in its historical context. This can perhaps be best clarified by an anecdote from the 1930s: Johannes Becher, the revolutionary expressionist poet of the 1920s, at the time a Comintern functionary who later became the culture minister of East Germany, bitterly complained to Lukács in Moscow of the harsh barbarism of the times. Lukács replied: "Can you imagine the advent of new Giottos and Masaccios from a decadent Rome without the interlude of Alarich's Goths?" This reflects all too clearly the spirit of a determinist philosophy of history: we recognize on the basis of personal and historical experience that there is no logical or historical necessity for the emergence of new Giottos. But the real question must ascertain who the advocates of new Giottos are and who the barbarians are. If we consider the hysterical cult of barbarism and primitivism exemplified by Godard or Saint Genet and practiced in cultural

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capitals, and if we recall the French philosopher Politzer extolling the "existential gesture" of the Red Guardist putting out his cigarette on the tapestries of the Winter Palace, we witness an insincere Holy Alliance of late Roman over-refinement masquerading as "simplicity" with a genuinely ignorant barbarism. The classicist Lukács demanded complete sincerety from those participating in culture and a clear understanding that "renunciation" of culture is in itself the cultural product of a degenerate civilization. He incessantly proposed a program of general cultural education for mankind. Despite all its ambivalences, Lukácsian classicism was the most democratic socialist alternative of the period.

The Lukácsian *Aesthetics*, the manifesto of the aesthetic education of mankind, is philosophically based on the following consideration: only in aesthetics is the unity of subject and object realized. To know Lukács work is to recognize the distinguished place of subject-object identity within it. In other words, this means that the only non-alienated sphere is the aesthetic. While the general problem of subject-object correlation cannot be discussed here, two critical remarks are in order. First of all, we must emphasize the importance ascribed to an elementary ontological constellation, according to which there is no object without subject and vice versa. The reverse is especially true for an orthodox Marxist like Lukács, who always vehemently defended the Marxian claim that a non-objective being is an un-being. Here we discover a position similar to one criticized by Lukács himself, namely, that of the emphatic relation to the thing in itself. Since style is decisive even in philosophy, Lukács' emphatic tone reveals remnants of an anti-reification mysticism never completely overcome. This mystical streak becomes more visible if we follow Lukács' conceptual shift. Subject-object correlation, the issue prompting our second critical remark, is an elementary ontological constellation that is gradually transformed into subject-object *unity* in nearly all of Lukács' works. But subject-object identity cannot maintain itself in equilibrium and can thus only be used to characterize moments of "peak experience." Hence, the term is expedient for founding an aesthetic sphere, but not suitable for any ontological distinction between the aesthetic and the non-aesthetic.

The above ontological detour was not a "refutation" but rather a circumscription of the "aesthetic sphere" with its advantages and limitations as it was devised specifically by Lukács. The sphere of subject-object unity is indeed an island in the sea of other spheres and forms of activities characterizable by a non-evaluative subject-object correlation. There is no romantic despair nor even resignation inherent in this statement. Aesthetic reception as subject-object unity is the highest possible instance of identification between the individual and the species; as such, it cannot be anything but unstable. It is a *model*, a paragon of types of behavior needed for everyday life and conceived in the true spirit of Lessing: art is a preparatory school for public virtues.

The first consequence of this standpoint is the reconciliation with everyday

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life, a novel feature in Lukács. The "methodological secret" of the book is the positing of an ultimately given, specific sphere of everyday life beyond which research cannot go. The Lukácsian version of the Husserlian *Lebenswelt* is actually a form of everyday thinking. Everyday thinking or the attitudes pertaining to daily life require an adequate personality structure, the "whole man" totally absorbed in his daily activities. At the same time, constant "outflows" and "inflows" take place from the base of daily activity to create higher forms of activities,. Lukács' "aesthetic ontology" is equivocally hierarchical: outflows toward art, science and religion, unhesitatingly deemed to be of a higher nature, thus enrich the substrate by their continuous "replenishing" action. In defining "the way of all flesh" (since no one can remain entirely within the framework of everyday life), Lukacsian theory gives an account of the dynamics of personality. At the same time, it is a general socio-historical model for explaining the evolution of mankind (the "species"), through its higher, more elaborate types of objectifications ("species objectifications") from an unarticulated compound of work, magic, prescience, pre-artistic mimetic elements—in short, the development of cosmos from chaos. The reader is confronted with a complete evolutionist philosophy of history which accomplishes the mysterious task formulated by Marx as a general principle: the unity of the philogenetic and ontogenetic.

The evolutionism inherent in this conception is a demystified version of the Hegelian march of the World Spirit. It is guided by a consistent immanent teleology resulting from incessant human postulations that direct the route of mankind constantly upward. The book implicitly maintains a hierarchical evaluative viewpoint from which science is judged higher than pre-scientific knowledge, religion higher than the magic cult, art higher than the primary mimetic structures inextricably connected with magic. In this sense, every stage of development finds its "truth" (in a genuinely Hegelian spirit) in the proceeding one, i.e., in the higher state resulting from the lower. To support this evolutionist tendency, Lukács operates not only in psychology but also in linguistic theory with the untenable concept of the "evolution of language" from the "abstract" to the "concrete." It would be all too easy to enumerate the contradictions of this evolutionism. It eliminates even the central Marxian dilemma of the perennial validity of art inseparable from epochs presumably transcended by the historical march of the species (i.e., the Homer paradox). This paradox remains despite Lukács' repeated assertion of the conception of unequal development. Indeed, this is a problematic aspect of Lukácsian rationalism that nevertheless has its positive consequence in bridging the gulf between Reason and the everyday attitudes of mankind. Thus, the most aristocratic characteristic of Lukácsian theory is eliminated. Instead, the aesthetic framework is constructed from below, the point of departure being the daily efforts of the same incurably alienated man condemned by Lukács in the 1930s and 1940s. When Lukács polemicizes against the Heideggerian concept of *Being and Time* in his own *Aesthetics*, he inadvertently takes a stand against the consequences of his own former theory. Without a doubt,

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the distinction between "below" and "above," the hierarchical mode of construction has been preserved, but is no longer identical with the differentiation between "surface" and "depth." The essentialism of the theory of realism is eliminated, or, more precisely, it is replaced by a genuinely democratic concept of the education of the personality.

The program of elevating the individual to the level of the species retains in its terminology certain essentialist remnants. The individual is the "crust" gradually penetrating to the "core," the "substantial" man. But we are no longer dealing with two "spheres" or separate worlds that are identifiable with the counterposed realms of sanity and disease. The Manichaean dichotomy of the 1930s and 1940s gives way increasingly to real ethical *alternatives* that have a solid basis in *everyday activity*. The ineluctable fundament of human life, everyday human activity, is both a springboard for the fixation of the particularist structure and a material basis for rising to the level of species. Consequently, it is an educational project, an expanded version and recurrence of the dynamic of ethical democracy as opposed to an essentialist ontology. At the same time, it is social therapy since it is the fixed particularism that becomes identified with the diseases of the personality. It presents itself as a democratic alternative realizable by every human being and giving rise to the aesthetic, i.e., the higher types of "species objectifications." It is superfluous to recall that all these characteristics were constitutive elements of the original classicist conception. *The Specificity of the Aesthetic* is not only the coronation of all of Lukács' efforts "in Weimar," but also the transformation of an essentialist ontology of fetishism into a cosmology of the self-creation of the individual.

The reconciliation with everyday life inevitably involves, however, the *rehabilitation of the recipient*. The terminological transition from "realism" and "reflection" to "mimesis" (a transition too important to be dealt with in its entirety and too imperfectly realized to be regarded as final) has a decisive impact on the structure of Lukács' whole theory. First of all, the "mimetic formation," initially a mere ingredient in the compound of magic and work and only later attaining a "world-character," is a collective activity that does not acknowledge the dichotomy of creative and receptive personality. For Lukács, the yardstick for measuring art remains the great masterpieces. However, the Kantian maxim that guided him for forty years ("there are works of art, but how are they possible?") formed a point of departure from which the unquestionable axiom of the existence of art as something ultimate could be decisively reshaped through the introduction of the principle of mimesis. The abolition of the above dichotomy is not only characteristic of the bygone age of the "archaeology of art," but represents a constantly recurring condition of the aesthetic as a sphere of activity: every participant is constitutive whether as artist *sui generis* or "merely" as the recipient creating in and by his daily activities the very preconditions for aesthetic activity. The constant and changing interplay between the conditions of the "whole man" (the personality of daily activities) and the "human whole" (man suspending

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his daily activities to turn toward art) is no longer a degrading moment but rather the potential state of fertility. In the *Aesthetics* of the later Lukács, one can appreciate the contribution of the recipient in the creation of the aesthetic sphere as the proper field of human education.

On this basis we can understand the importance of the Lukacsian category of "species being" (*Gattungsmässigkeit*). The greatest accomplishment of aesthetics is that it elevates man—both through his creative and receptive abilities—from the everyday sphere onto the level of the species being. This is the process of "becoming substantial" in the late Lukács which replaces the former process of penetrating into the "sphere of essence" from the "merely apparent." Although the capacity for transcendence into the essential (especially under universally fetishized circumstances) remains a somewhat mysterious "triumph of realism" reserved for the elect few, the possibility of being elevated onto the level of species being is, in principle, open to everyone. For this reason, the aesthetic sphere is not only a democratic but also a pluralistic one. *The Specificity of the Aesthetic* provides a universal philosophical foundation for the pluralism of ethical democracy outlined in the literary essays of the 1930s and 1940s.

We all know that the gods of merry Epicure lived in *intermundia*, a sheltered world provided by the clefts of a diffuse universe. Under the dense substrate of his world, Lukács, the Olympian, took refuge in the "Weimar" of his classicism, in a self-wrought intermundium. Although an Olympian, he was very much a humane and a militant spirit. As a consequence, his elaborate classicist writings can only find a temporary abode in the *intermundium*. They have a message for the external world: the program of socialism as realized ethical democracy.

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TROTSKY'S MARXISM — PERMANENT INVOLUTION?

by Peter Beilharz

Although Bolshevism has been partially discredited,[1] Trotsky has rarely been subjected to scrutiny[2] and Trotskyism remains influential within the Western left. In fact, Trotsky epitomizes the worst elements of orthodox Marxism. Trotsky's development falls into four phases — pre-Bolshevism (till 1917), ultra-Bolshevism (1917-23), defensive Bolshevism (1923-38), and incipient post-Bolshevism (1938-40). Trotsky theorizes permanent revolution in the first period, inserting the Party into it in the second and casting some doubts on his entire life work in the final period. In *The USSR in War* and in some sections of his biography of Stalin, Trotsky almost breaks with orthodoxy. Even in *The Revolution Betrayed* there are doubts which were certainly absent from his earlier writings as left-oppsitionist. This late tension between orthodoxy and criticism in Trotsky is not clearly resolved. The history of Trotskyism subsequent to 1940 shows that critical perspectives were to be suppressed: Marx's beard was not to be trimmed, let alone his thought refurbished.[3]

In epistemology both Lenin and Trotsky follow *Anti-Dühring*: they pride themselves in possessing a materialism which is an advance over eighteenth century mechanical materialism. For Trotsky "our thought, including dialectical thought, is only one of the forms of changing matter."[4] Like Lenin, Trotsky thinks that matter produces revolution, succumbing to the grossest voluntarism when revolution is not forthcoming.[5] But this is not to say that Trotsky's epistemology is completely vulgar. He attacks sensualism because molecular reality is intangible. In fact, he includes waves, electricity and so on in the realm of materiality, endorsing the theses of *Materialism and*

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1. See the various essays in *Telos*; C. Claudin-Urondo, *Lenin and the Cultural Revolution* (Sussex, 1977); M. Liebman, *Leninism under Lenin* (London, 1975). The entire tradition of council communism is of course also set against Bolshevism: see, e.g., Serge Bricianer, ed., *Pannekoek and the Workers' Councils* (St. Louis, 1978). Recent attempts to save Lenin have failed to establish that his theory is not in most respects pre-Marxist. See e.g., J. Hoffman, *Marxism and the Theory of Praxis* (London, 1975); D. Ruben, *Marxism and Materialism* (Sussex, 1977). The most elementary defense is N. Harding's *Lenin's Political Thought* (London, 1977). Ignoring *Two Tactics*, Harding discovers that Lenin was not a Jacobin nor a populist, but a Marxist who analyzed specificities!

2. Two good critiques of Trotsky are either brief or partial: G. Hodgson, *Trotsky and Fatalistic Marxism* (Nottingham, 1975), P. Thompson and G. Lewis, *The Revolution Unfinished? A Critique of Trotskyism* (London, 1977).

3. The unity which the late Trotsky sought with Shachtman was strategic; Trotsky gave his organizational support to Cannon and the orthodox against "the petty-bourgeois tendencies of the opposition." But so ambivalent is Trotsky's late position that even while he is rethinking the status of the Soviet Union he is formally reinforcing dialectical materialism (reciting his ABC's in "in defense of Marxism") and aligning himself with the orthodox in the Socialist Workers' Party.

4. *In Defense of Marxism* (New York, 1973) p. 51. Cf. *In Defense of the Russian Revolution* (New York, 1938), p. 7; Trotsky, *Writings 1939-40* (New York, 1972), p. 403.

5. Cf. Lenin, *Collected Works Vol. 14*, p. 55, 325.

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Empirio-criticism.[6] Trotsky's mistake is rather in accepting the orthodox division between men and matter.[7] Mind is a derivative faculty: the best it can achieve, dialectical thought, correlates only with a moving picture of empirical reality.[8] In fundamentals Trotsky's epistemology does not differ from Lenin's reflectionism.

Like Lenin, Trotsky is caught in the dominant (Second International) tendency to view Marxism and natural science as converging, or as united in the first place. From Labriola — a progressive thinker in the context of the Second International — Trotsky takes only what he needs, the positivist-materialist current uniting Saint-Simon and Marx.[9] In one text we find Trotsky postulating the essential similarity between chemical and astronomical discovery and the analysis of social affairs: knowledge is not understood as a *production*. He parallels the discovery of Neptune and the analysis of the Paris Commune, the discovery of Phlogiston with that of the "soul," Marx with Mendelyev. He reduces psychology to physiology and the latter to chemistry, mechanics and physics.[10] Trotsky reduces all social and human affairs to materiality as he understands it, and thus concludes with an unqualified endorsement of Pavlov.[11]

In this context, Mavrakis has noted that Trotsky understood Marx's method in *Capital* as a vain display of philosophical pedantry.[12] Trotsky claims to reject general categories: for him "only vulgar thought operates with such concepts as capitalism, morals, freedom, workers' state etc., as fixed abstractions, presuming that capitalism is equal to capitalism, morals are equal to morals, etc."[13] Trotsky glosses over the problem of categories "in general." (Do we use them or not? Where do they come from? Are they all equally useful?) According to his position *Capital* itself (or any sustained piece of theory) is vulgar, for it is a critical analysis of capital "in general." Like

6. "Radioactivity and Materialism," in Deutscher (ed). *The Age of Permanent Rvolution* (New York, 1973), pp. 352ff. Buick oversimplifies matters when he accuses Trotsky of eighteenth century mechanistic materialism — for Trotsky makes clear that "tangibility" is to be scientifically and not sensually understood. A. Buick, "Joseph Dietzgen," *Radical Philosophy*, 10, p. 7 n. 22.

7. Deutscher, *op. cit.*, p. 352.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 358.

9. Z. Jordan, *The Evolution of Dialectical Materialism* (London, 1967), pp. 115ff; Trotsky, *My Life* (Harmondsworth, 1975), p. 123. Compare another student of Labriola: Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, p. 386.

10. "Dialectical Materialism and Science," in Deutscher, *op. cit.*, p. 346.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 348. Elsewhere Trotsky is less adamant (e.g., *ibid.*, p. 351). In another place Trotsky is anxious to establish that Freud and Pavlov are not incompatible: "Culture and Socialism," *ibid.*, pp. 311ff; see also *Literature and Revolution*, (Ann Arbor, 1971), p. 220. Cynics may note that the working class eventually becomes Pavlov's dog. Shortage of texts restricts further comment here. The only other relevant text known of is unavailable. In Trotsky's *Diary in Exile 1935* (London, 1958), p. 109, he refers to an article on the "interrelationship between the physiological determinism of brain processes and the 'autonomy' of thought, which is subject to the laws of logic." This article has not been traced.

12. K. Mavrakis, *On Trotskyism* (London, 1976), p. 41.

13. *In Defense of Marxism*, p. 50 (cf. "Results and Prospects," in *Permanent Revolution*, p. 64). The relevance of the metaphor of equivalence is unclear; on this basis state capitalism is a quite acceptable notion.

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Lenin, Trotsky tends to fetishise historical specificity, equating real and thought objects by suggesting that the former can be known "as it is." Marx's categories are discarded in the process of what may be called conjuncturalism — yet ideological categories are let in the back door.

Trotsky's General Theory of History

The theory of "permanent revolution" was conceived through the collaboration of Parvus and Trotsky around 1905, though the theory itself as known today is essentially Trotsky's. From Parvus Trotsky took two general observations on the nature of contemporary history: first, the internationalization of capital and, second, the obsolescence of the nation state. In Trotsky's earlier elaboration of this theory[14] these observations are incorporated into an orthodox economistic schematism (*qua* the 1859 *Preface*): as a force of production, international capital breaks through the relations of the national state. This is the basis of one half of the theory of permanent revolution — a functional internationalism. For Trotsky internationalism "is no abstract principle but a theoretical and political reflection of the character of the world economy."[15]

The other aspect of the theory of permanent revolution is the telescoping of the two traditional revolutions, bourgeois and proletarian. For Trotsky the Russian Revolution is bourgeois in that its *immediate* (?) historical tasks are bourgeois. Yet, its personnel is "proletarian," and the logic of proletarian power is socialist revolution. (This was not Parvus' position — his insistence on the necessity of an interim regime was closer to Lenin than to Trotsky). Revolution is therefore permanent because it begins as bourgeois but cannot be completed as such.[16] This second aspect of Trotsky's theory is by no means as inoffensive as the first. The initial problem is that Trotsky virtually dismisses objective conjunctural features, arguing that the nature of revolutionary personnel determines the revolutionary outcome.[17] Associated with this mistake is a general tendency to fail to differentiate between the "elements" of revolution. Given Trotsky's *basic* understanding of socialism as nationalization, a process of conflating the two "stages" is inevitable. Trotsky assumes that proletarian revolution as democratic revolution can solve the problems of two revolutions.[18] But the crux of the matter here is not whether

14. "Results and Prospects," p. 37. Like Lenin Trotsky fluctuates here between automatism and voluntarism, cf. pp. 63, 67; cf. also the Preface of "La Revolution Defigurée," *Writings 1929*, p. 124.

15. *Permanent Revolution* (New York, 1974), p. 133. On a logical level this is an unobjectionable position to some extent prefiguring the recent work of Emmanuel and Amin on the questions of world exchange and accumulation (though it is informative to note that like Amin et. al. Trotsky underestimates national specificities). Trotsky's position is quite simple: in a world capitalist system socialism in one country is a logical impossibility.

16. *Ibid.*, ch. 2. An obvious protest here concerns the possibility of a so-called "third way" — bureaucratic collectivism, etc.

17. Trotsky's attempt to root "permanent revolution" in Marx's work is insubstantial: Marx toys with this voluntaristic idea around 1848 *only to reject it*, returning to the study of objective structures the better to understand the relation between subject and object, erring now in favor of the latter.

18. "Results and Prospects," p. 132.

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there are two "stages:" it is where the bourgeois culture prerequisite for socialist revolution comes from, and how long it takes to permeate social life. In Trotsky's scheme we can barely tell when bourgeois revolution becomes socialist: as in Lenin, men presumably became socialists *after* the revolution.

Why does Trotsky insist that bourgeois revolutions inevitably become proletarian? The underpinning notion here is an economistic maxim, viz.: "The time (for socialism) is always ripe." As Hodgson puts it, permanent revolution is premised on the principle of permanent collapse.[19] The economic base has done its work: the capitalist mode has nowhere to go but to the scrapheap.[20] World economy is ripe for revolution and individual nations are subject to ripeness via the mediation of uneven development.[21] Trotsky, however, misuses the principle of uneven development as a political tool. He assumes that uneven development has a levelling effect, homogenizing the world so that all situations become the same, i.e., revolutionary.[22] He understands the presence of imperialism outside the center as symbolizing a cultural leap for the periphery into a bourgeois era. But the victims of imperialism experience the negative aspects of bourgeois culture without necessarily gaining the positive ones. Trotsky, however, postulates a kind of inverted domino theory dependent on the universality of capital: where capital intrudes, there the bed of *socialist* revolution is laid. Consequently, Trotsky understands the present revolutionary *epoch* as a continually revolutionary *situation*: he sees the entire twentieth century as one massive conjuncture.

Trotsky's notion of combined development is problematic. It is actually *derived* from uneven development: the combination injects a teleology and becomes a prime mover. But though 'combined development' may explain the rapid growth of West Germany or the so-called "Italian miracle," it says *nothing* in terms of revolutionary culture or political possibilities. Only in an economistic framework where culture can be "read off" does combined development take on teleological powers. For in cultural terms, combined development means *chaos*, i.e., uneveness. Combined development as a theoretical motor is vacuous or, at best, circular. To base a theory on the notion that discontinuity becomes a prime mover is absurd; a break is a break, not a leap. Uneven development implies fragmentation, not great leaps forward. Trotsky's only excuse here is that *his* concept of combined development is more or less pre-theoretical. A few words in *The History of the Russian Revolution* have been hypostatized by Trotsky's followers into a first principle.[23]

19. G. Hodgson, *Trotsky and Fatalistic Marxism*, pp. 30ff.
20. *Ibid.*; R.B. Day, "The Theory of the Long Cycle: Kondratiev, Trotsky, Mandel," *New Left Review*, 99, pp. 74, 78.
21. *Permanent Revolution*, p. 254.
22. "Results and Prospects," p. 105.
23. *History of the Russian Revolution* (London, 1967), Vol. I, p. 23. See also the excellent analysis in the seminal work by B. Knei-Paz, *The Social and Political Thought of Leon Trotsky* (London, 1978), pp. 89ff.

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Trotsky's theory of history is lacking in its treatment of both objective and subjective factors. He understands the objective-subjective couple only as a base-superstructure couple. An ideologically assumed economic crisis (objective) determines a political crisis which is solved by the intervention of the party (subjective). His theory is therefore simultaneously voluntarist and determinist — voluntarist because its conjunctural readings are inaccurate and determinist because of its causal crisis — consciousness link.[24] In *Results and Prospects* Trotsky details his analysis of the prerequisites for socialism, i.e., the objective aspect.[25] In any given country there must be higher productivity in large capitals than in small. There must be rapid economic growth and therefore expansion of the proletariat. On the political level there must be growth culminating in proletarian dictatorship. Trotsky, like Lenin in the *Development of Capitalism in Russia*, sees *rate of growth* as the determinant of ripeness. He concludes, inevitably, that the time is ripe: for there would be few countries to which the above scenario would be completely inapplicable. "Uneven development" becomes the rationalization for the few possible exceptions: they can be "carried along," so the entire world is in an objectively revolutionary situation.

In his *Manifesto on the Imperialist War and the Proletarian Revolution*, Trotsky defines a revolutionary situation as one in which there is a divided bourgeoisie, a similar petty bourgeoisie, proletarian malaise, and a revolutionary party.[26] Like Lenin, Trotsky does not differentiate between *social crisis* and *revolutionary situation*. The bogus economic crisis which he claims to be a fixed characteristic of all post first war capitalism is merely a supplementary factor.

Trotsky's theory of the subjective aspect is even more suspect. By 1938, when he drafts the *Transitional Program* of the Fourth International, Trotsky announces that "the world political situation as a whole is chiefly characterized by a historical crisis of the leadership of the proletariat...the objective prerequisites for the proletarian revolution have not only 'ripened,' they have begun to get somewhat rotten...the turn is now to the proletariat, i.e., chiefly to its revolutionary vanguard. The historical crisis of mankind is reduced to the crisis of revolutionary leadership."[27] Trotsky's crisis is not in the working class: its "consciousness" presents no problem. Clearly, Trotsky

24. Hodgson, p. 30f. In *Permanent Revolution*, Trotsky clearly identifies "subjective" with "party:" p. 189. D. Avenas makes the same point in "Trotsky's Marxism," *International* 3-2, (1976), Part One, p. 25 (1977), Part Two, p. 44 (citing "Third International After Lenin"). For a philosophical reading cf. Dunayevskaya, "Leon Trotsky as Man and Theoretician," *Studies in Comparative Communism*, Special Number, X, 1-2 (1977), pp. 169ff.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 82f.

26. In Deutscher's anthology, p. 261; *Writings 1939-40*, p. 217. Cf. "Left Wing Communism." See also *Whither France?* (New York, 1968), p. 27. In "What is a Revolutionary Situation?" *Writings 1930-31*, pp. 352-55, Trotsky's understanding is more qualified than Lenin's but it is still essentially economist: consciousness is produced by crisis (p. 352), in a *response* to crisis (p. 353). In Trotsky's vague understanding of relative autonomy subject still equals party (p. 354). See also the qualified economism similar to that of the later Engels in *Writings 1930-31*, pp. 209 210

27. *Transitional Program* (New York, 2970), pp. 4ff.

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has no notion of subjectivity: he sees only "objective" interests (socialism). The workers could not possibly "betray themselves:" therefore they must be misled. Here enters not only a fetish of leadership but also a concomitant workerism.[28]

One source of Trotsky's erroneous revolutionary optimism seems to be his Enlightenment concept of human nature. In this view, people are "essentially" good (revolutionary) but are prevented from self-realization by institutional repression. Lenin's vehement attack on the bourgeois state reveals a similar disposition. Neither of these positions however, has much in common with Marx, for whom "all history is nothing but a continuous transformation of human nature."[29] Marx's position may be that men are capable of being good, but it is *not* that they are would-be revolutionaries merely subjugated by a wicked bourgeoisie. Men may become revolutionary, but this is possible only via consciousness raising through transformative practice. For Trotsky mass consciousness is not such a problem at all.

Trotsky elevates leadership to the level of a final determinant. The Party almost becomes an ethical value,[30] and here enters elitism and eventually substitutionism. In the event of the failure of his idealized proletariat to rise to great heights, Trotsky returns to the domain of the "great man." In his diary he observes, for example, that Lenin alone was responsible for October.[31] It does not occur to him that such a situation might indicate revolutionary prematurity, or conversely that given adequate ferment the working class itself might break through a leadership impasse. Trotsky's theory takes its final trajectory into mainstream history.[32] Socialist man becomes superman: "the average human type will rise to the heights of an Aristotle, a Goethe, or a Marx. And above this ridge new peaks will arise."[33] Trotsky's scenario is an intellectual utopia lacking even the balance of Marx's vision in the *German Ideology*, where men still live as simultaneously physical and intellectual beings. Further, Trotsky's supermen can be no different to Nietzsche's: not all men can be superman.[34] The "higher species" exists only at the cost of the "lower species" — a paradox completely foreign to the ethic of socialism, if not to the problems of the USSR.

In summary, Trotsky's revolutionary situation is built on minimum conditions which are not adequate for self-willed human progress. As a rationale for making "socialism" in backward countries the theory of

28. *Ibid.*, p. 37, cf. p. 42. Note also Trotsky's comments on fascism: "Hitler's 'ideology' never seriously gripped the workers" (p. 33). Trotsky's thinking here resembles Michels' objectivism — both hypostatize the imputed interests of working class. See also *Writings 1935-36*, p. 34.

29. *The Poverty of Philosophy* (New York, 1963), p. 147.

30. This error is not identical to Lenin's. Lenin's partyism emerges as the compensatory force given insufficient objective conditions: for Trotsky objective conditions are ripe. Lenin's mistake is practical, Trotsky's theoretical. Dunayevskaya, "Leon Trotsky," explains Trotsky's fetishism by reference to his failure to thrash out the issue of the party over a period of years (p. 174).

31. *Diary in Exile*, pp. 53ff.

32. Cf. e.g., E.H. Carr, *What is History?* (Harmondsworth, 1973), ch. 2.

33. *Literature and Revolution*, p. 256.

34. Nietzsche, *The Will to Power* (New York, 1968), pp. 19, 24, 478.

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permanent revolution does violence to the basic principles of historical materialism. Trotsky's revolution is largely a tactical affair,[35] an act in the super-structure enabling a change in property form. Here we are a long way from Marx's theory and from the conditions which prompted its genesis.

One characteristic of Trotsky's theory is the role of analogy as the method typical of the "educated" philistine.[36] Surprisingly, we find a partiality for analogy in his own work. Trotsky can only understand China as a Russian replay.[37] Even more serious is his consistent use of the French revolution as an historical analogy. Trotsky does not distinguish bourgeois and proletarian revolutions on the historical plane either: he assumes the necessary break prompted by the development of free labor[38] to be parallel to socialist revolution, which is in an unprecedented manner an affair of mass will. Bourgeois revolution is the last act legalizing subterranean developments in the social formation, the blossoming dominance of the capitalist mode, hegemony of the towns and industrial capital and so on. Socialist revolution presupposes objective developments but is in no way ensured by them: for its object is not the replacement of private property in land with private property in capital but the abolition of capital as a social power and the creation of a new society by new men and women.

An associated error of Trotsky's here is a political determinism similar to Lenin's. Trotsky thinks that a bourgeois revolution proper must be introduced by the bourgeoisie[39] — he understates the role of objective forces. He fails to understand the bourgeoisie as representatives (bearers) of bourgeois social forces rather than vice versa: for as Poulantzas puts it, the bourgeois revolution sweeps the bourgeoisie into power, not the other way around.[40] Trotsky cannot conceive that capitalism can exist without the bourgeoisie in its classical form,[41] that is, that the fate of the Russian Revolution may be inscribed in its *objective forces* and not determined by its "proletarian" leadership. In this regard, Trotsky's method is closer to idealism than to historical materialism. The theory of permanent revolution, based on a political conflation, betrays also an epistemological conflation. Everything tends to become everything else, everything becomes possible given socialist intention. But the road to hell is paved with good intentions and Trotsky, like Lenin, is felled from behind by the "ruse of history."

Trotsky's Theory of History in Action

It is widely acknowledged that Trotsky's voice was that of a prophet in a

35. "Results," p. 88. Cf. however, *Culture and Socialism* (London, 1975); *Where is Britain Going?* (London, 1970), pp. 23ff; *Through What Stage are we Passing?* (London, 1965).
36. "Results," pp. 29, 36.
37. *Ibid.*, pp. 138f, 228, and passim. Trotsky can of course only understand *all* non-fascist situations as Russian replays, but we have as yet an insufficient basis to argue this.
38. K. Marx, *Grundrisse*, (Harmondsworth, 1973), pp. 471ff.
39. *Permanent Revolution*, p. 215. See also *The Class Nature of the Soviet State* (London, 1973).
40. Poulantzas, *Political Power and Social Classes*, (London, 1973), p. 183.
41. Cf. e.g., Hindess, Hirst, Cutler and Hussain, *Marx's Capital and Capitalism Today* (London, 1977), Vol. I, ch. 5 and part 3.

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working class movement confronted with nascent German fascism. His 1930-33 analyses of Germany and the Comintern were uniquely apt — even if more foresightful than insightful.[42] Though sharing the Comintern's economism,[43] Trotsky understands the falsity of the "third period" prognosis, given the defeats in Britain and China.[44] He displays the idiocy of "social fascism," predicts the victory of Hitler, the pursuant holocaust, the attack on the USSR and the death of the Comintern.

But this is not to say that Trotsky's analysis of Germany was flawless. Central to Trotsky's analysis is the problem of leadership. Germany in 1930 is, he says, an objectively revolutionary situation[45] — the situation is ripe for socialist revolution or for fascism, the final determinant being the position taken by the petty bourgeoisie.[46] Trotsky postulates a socialism or barbarism alternative, which he illustrates as the "Russian way" or the "Italian way."[47] Revolutionary optimism shows through: fascism is a response to nascent socialist revolution, the working class defensive against fascism signals the approaching offensive.[48] Trotsky's position on Italy — that fascism is the punishment for failed revolutionaries — is similar to his position on Germany, and equally mistaken.[49] An associated error is his idealization of the proletariat. Not until 1933 will Trotsky acknowledge that fascism has a "proletarian" base. He acknowledges only that it is permeating the upper and lower extremities of the proletariat since its core is "naturally" socialist.[50]

Trotsky's analysis of France in the period following the emergence of Nazism is also structured in the format of Italian or Russian alternatives.[51] France is headed in the former direction and needs to be turned to the latter.[52] France and Germany seem to be separated only by a degree of development: in other words Trotsky seems to suggest a Bonapartism — fascism continuum. *Whither France* is permeated with a socialism or barbarism scenario, the logic of which militates against Trotsky's position on social fascism. Unlike his writings on Germany, those on France are not characterized by a clear distinction between Bonapartism and fascism.[53]

42. *The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany* (New York, 1972); "Fascism: What It Is," in Deutscher's anthology. Thalheimer — an interesting alternative — has methodological problems of his own.
43. *The Struggle*, p. 118.
44. *Ibid.*, p. 56.
45. *Ibid.*, p. 66.
46. *Ibid.*, pp. 59ff.
47. *Ibid.*, p. 82, pp. 184ff.
48. Poulantzas, *Fascism and Dictatorship* (London, 1974), p. 62, pp. 80ff.; Trotsky, *The Third International After Lenin* (New York, 1974), pp. 112ff.; E. Laclau, *Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory* (London, 1977), ch. 3.
49. *The Struggle*, p. 189. Cf. note 56 below. Trotsky's error here is not exceptional but the *common view*.
50. *Ibid.*, p. 234. After 1933 Trotsky acknowledged that workers may support fascism through political *indifference*: *ibid.*, p. 412.
51. *Whither France?* pp. 6, 49.
52. *Ibid.*, p. 8.
53. Poulantzas, *Fascism and Dictatorship*, pp. 61ff.; Deutscher, *The Prophet Outcast* (London, 1970), p. 276n.

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French fascism, of course, failed to develop, as did French socialism, Trotsky's analysis of the "revolutionary situation" notwithstanding.[54]

As already mentioned, Trotsky regarded Italian fascism as something of a providential punishment for those who failed to carry through the tasks of the Italian Revolution. The year 1920 must therefore have provided a revolutionary situation: if it did not, Trotsky's "analysis" is a *non sequitur*. His diagnosis: that the Italian Revolution was in 1920 "an actual fact"[55] is regarded by few with such certainty. As one major historian puts it, "one of the classic conditions for revolution, the decision of the masses to make it, was critically subject to dislocations, to uneven development in organization, maturity, homogeneity and ideology, which were to prove no less significant in the struggle against squadrism during 1921-2."[56] As is often the case in this history of the working class movement, we are caught in the nether world between "revolt" and "revolution."

Trotsky's analysis of Britain figures as something of a prediction for the British Revolution, the latter taking the form of the 1926 General Strike. The strike clearly indicates to Trotsky a revolutionary situation restricted by retrograde leaders.[57] For him, the British Revolution would have been successful "in the course of a few weeks" given adequate leadership[58] — for the British proletariat, revolutionary in its millions, had only been held back thus far by the bourgeoisie and its Fabian agents.[59] But again, to leap from the fact of the General Strike "to assuming that Britain. . . was on the brink of a revolutionary crisis, that the failure of the Communist Party to give a "correct" lead crippled the imminent revolutionary potential of the strike, reveals a profound failure to comprehend the realities of the *working class consciousness*."[60] Trotsky's analysis of Britain reveals a classic misunderstanding of militancy as revolutionary fervor, locating the real problem not at the level of mass consciousness but at that of leadership. Revolutions which do not exist in the minds of the masses can hardly be said to be betrayed.[61]

Spain, it seems, was potentially *the* socialist revolution of the twentieth century. Claudin's recent authoritative work confirms Trotsky's analysis here, viz. that Spain was a thoroughly revolutionary situation, even one of an

54. *Whither France?* pp. 50, 141. Note the title of the last essay: "The French Revolution Has Begun." This volume was printed in response to the French May: in 1968 Mandel (*Lessons of May 1968* [London, 1971]) paralleled 1936 and 1968 as Revolutions Betrayed. More recently ("Interview," *NLR* 100, pp. 101ff.), Mandel has changed his mind: neither were revolutionary situations; Trotsky was "wrong."

55. *The Struggle*, p. 189.

56. P. Spriano, *The Occupation of the Factories* (London, 1975), p. 137; Gramsci, *Political Writings 1910-20* (London, 1977), pp. 327ff. See also S. Bologna, "Class Composition and the Theory of the Party," *Telos* 13, pp. 3-27.

57. *Where is Britain Going?* Part 1, especially Second German Preface. See also "Lessons of October" in *The Essential Trotsky* (London, 1963), p. 169.

58. *Where is Britain Going?* p. XIV, 11.

59. *Ibid.*, p. XV. See further, *Writings on Britain* (London, 1973), 3 vols., especially Vol. 2.

60. J. Hinton and R. Hyman, *Trade Unions and Revolution: The Industrial Politics of the Early CPGB* (London, 1975), p. 45, (emphasis mine), see also pp. 38-46.

61. See again, Laclau's penetrating analysis in the third chapter of *Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory*.

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unprecedented type.[62] Spain fully fitted Trotsky's socialism-barbarism scheme[63] but the weight of foreign intervention and incorrect tactics on a local and world scale saw the victory of the latter. Trotsky's analysis of Spain is similar to that of Germany. Again his analysis of the Comintern and internal tactics are incisive. Again the problem of leadership is given central focus. Trotsky concentrates on the party which was not present — the party of the Fourth International.[64] He views that party as a panacea in the face of POUM "treachery." Rather than castigating communist betrayal, Trotsky emphasizes the inability of POUM to provide Bolshevik leadership.[65] His understanding precludes the kind of left coalition which Claudin points to as a desirable possibility.

Generally, Trotsky universalizes the socialism-barbarism couple, which is quite apt in some conjunctures but does not fit others at all. His ability to differentiate between Bonapartism and fascism is limited to cases in which fascism is actually ripening; otherwise he presumes bourgeois democracy to be completely played out — which is blatantly not the case. It becomes clear that Trotsky's socialism-barbarism couple rests on the general theory of imminent revolution. Despite his own methodological provisos, Trotsky in some cases "dissolves the momentary situation within the general perspective," crediting one or two factors (leadership, party) with determining powers.[66]

Mavrakis' contention that Trotsky never studies a conjuncture in its specificity has been refuted. Trotsky analyzes two basic conjunctures — Russia and Germany — and reads all other situations ideologically through this grid. The rectitude of his Spanish and German analyses is the reverse side of his ideological and irrelevant analyses of bourgeois democracies. This condition is directly related to the irrelevance of Trotskyism for the West today. For "the most dangerous thing in politics is to become a prisoner of your own formula."[67]

Trotsky's Schizoid Socialism

As a means of entry to this area, it is appropriate to mention Trotsky's lived record, and in particular his understanding of socialism as reflected in his practice. Of course, Trotsky is widely known as an authoritarian. His early organizational radicalism, particularly the famous and remarkable insight

62. F. Claudin, *The Communist Movement* (Harmondsworth, 1975), pp. 210ff.

63. *The Spanish Revolution: 1931-1939* (New York, 1973), p. 295. The nature of the "Socialism" postulated in this couple is unclear. According to Claudin a uniquely Spanish pluralist socialism was possible; whereas the nature of communism during the Purge period would suggest a one-party state. In the latter case, "socialism or barbarism" should read "state capitalism or fascism."

64. *Ibid.*, e.g., pp. 108, 211, 214, 300, 326; cf. "Open Letter for the Fourth International," *Writings 1935-1936*, pp. 16-20.

65. *The Spanish Revolution*, pp. 353ff. This unfinished text — "The Class, The Party, The Leadership" — is not free from ambiguity.

66. *Spanish Revolution*, p. 292.

67. Trotsky according to A. Swabeck, "Visiting Trotsky at Prinkipo," *Studies in Comparative Communism*, p. 159.

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into substitutionism, is often overlooked, though there have been some recent attempts to cast him as a Luxemburgist gone wrong.[68] Such attempts to "save" Trotsky come into difficulty when they come up against Trotsky's record after 1917. His performance in the handling of the Kronstadt rising,[69] the "militarization of labor," his endorsement of Taylorism,[70] his attitude to Soviets and so on[71] can all be taken as symptoms of étatism. "We are moving towards the type of labor that is socially regulated on the basis of an economic plan obligatory for the whole country, i.e., forced on every worker. This is the basis of socialism...the militarization of labor."[72] This and other texts like *Terrorism and Communism* indicate a complete if conjuncturally "determined" victory for the compulsion principle, giving fuel to writers like Solzhenitsyn. Trotsky's record clearly negates his early organizational radicalism. It might be suggested, however, that this "negation" takes the form not of obliteration but of repression, creating a surplus that emerges in the intellectualism of *Literature and Revolution*. If Trotsky's practice and political theory already suggest the presence of a bourgeois concept of socialism, the place given to ethics is no more impressive. According to Trotsky, "the most popular...accusation directed against Bolshevik "amoralism" bases itself on the so-called Jesuitical maxim of Bolshevism — 'the ends justifies the means'."[73] Trotsky disappears into situation ethics: one may shoot a mad dog but not commit murder. He overloods the problem of the person (e.g., the Kronstadt rebel) whom the State deems a "mad dog." The problem of moral arbiter is overpassed: "that is permissible...which *really* leads to the liberation of mankind."[74] To the obvious retort — who is to decide? — comes the answer: the Party. "In the last analysis the party is always right, because the party is the sole historical instrument that the working class possesses for the solution of its fundamental tasks. No one can be right against the party...with historic justification we can say "My Party, right or wrong'."[75] "There can be no contradiction between personal morality and the interests of the party, since the party embodies...the very highest

68. E.g., Carlo, "Trotsky and the Organization Problem," *Critique* 7, pp. 19-29. Knei-Paz gives a generous precis of the rare 1904 text "Our Political Tasks," *The Social and Political Thought of Trotsky*, pp. 185-207. He argues that there are here elements of a prefigurative critique of Bolshevism. The theorization of permanent revolution with its necessary telescoping negates these mass perspectives.

69. See e.g., P. Avrich, *Kronstadt 1921* (Princeton, 1970).

70. R. Pethybridge, *Social Prelude to Stalinism* (London, 1974), pp. 104ff; *Revolution Betrayed* (New York, 1972), p. 61, cf. Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, pp. 301ff; Trotsky, "If America Should Go Communist" in Deutscher's anthology, pp. 220ff.

71. See, e.g., M. Brinton, *The Bolsheviks and Workers Control* (Detroit, 1975), pp. 37, 56, 61, 66ff.

72. "Tretii Syezd Profsoyuzou," quoted in J. Carmichael, *Trotsky* (London, 1975), p. 259.

73. "Ends and Means in Morality," in Deutscher's anthology, p. 331.

74. *Ibid.*, p. 338.

75. Speech to the Thirteenth Party Congress, May 26, 1924, in Trotsky, *The Challenge of the Left Opposition 1923-25* (New York, 1975), p. 161. The Pathfinder translation has "right or wrong...this is my party." All other translations — Serge and Sedova, Knei-Paz, Carmichael, have "my party right or wrong."

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tasks and aims of mankind."[76] Trotsky is a moral democratic centralist; through the Party he espouses a positivity of truth. Where ethics are given a place, they are those not of socialism but of the French Revolution. Like Lenin, Trotsky's ethics are those of Jacobinism.[77] The Party becomes not only the absolute moral arbiter but also something of an ethic in itself. He who theorized substitution in 1904 allows its rationalization twenty years on.

Clearly, one of Trotsky's concepts of socialism relates to the Soviet Union. Given Trotsky's internationalism, the USSR cannot be more than a transitional regime. Internal factors such as low productivity reinforce this transitional status:[78] Socialism must by definition have a higher development of productive forces than late capitalism.[79] In the central ninth chapter of *Revolution Betrayed* Trotsky defines the USSR as "essentially" socialist. The Soviet Union is a workers' state because of the production relations introduced in October. There is no bourgeoisie therefore there is no ruling class.[80] Trotsky's criteria do not relate to social relations in the mode of production but to the terms of operative legal ownership. The bureaucracy does not legally *own* the means of production, therefore it is not a class. The USSR can only be a workers' State, albeit a degenerated one ruled by a bureaucratic stratum.[81] Trotsky's suggested remedy — political revolution[82] — thus assumes the existence of a socialist economy. In a classically reductionist manner, Trotsky determines the base to be satisfactory, the superstructure corrupt.[83] The USSR is "base"-ically socialist.[84]

There are two central protests here. First, political: a workers' State where workers are excluded from political power is a logical absurdity.[85] Trotsky's workers' State can only be a State nationalized "on behalf of" the workers.

76. "Their Morals and Ours," quoted in M. Merleau-Ponty, *The Adventures of the Dialectic* (London, 1974), p. 79 and ch. 4 passim.

77. *Writings 1936-7*, p. 330; Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, pp. 121ff.

78. *Revolution Betrayed*, p. 80.

79. *Ibid.*, pp. 45ff; *Writings 1935-36*, p. 122. My presentation here is filleted of some of Trotsky's ambiguities: the Russian State is socialist but society is not (*Writings 1932-33*, p. 216); nationalization in itself ensures not only the plan but also social economy and so on.

80. *Ibid.*, pp. 248ff. The class nature of the USSR was subject to debate as early as 1930: Trotsky's position is certainly not ill-considered. Note, however, that the level of these debates is always "find the bourgeois," *not* "detect bourgeois social relations."

81. Nationalization equals socialism: socialist relations of production are capitalist relations with a change in property form. See Avenas, "Trotsky's Marxism," Part 2, p. 42; "Revolution Betrayed" in *International Council Correspondence,* March 5-6, 1937, pp. 29-34.

82. *Revolution Betrayed*, pp. 252, 288.

83. Cf. *The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany*, pp. 218, 255. See further, Krygier, "Bureaucracy in Trotsky's Analysis of Stalinism," in M. Sawer (ed.) *Socialism and the New Class* (APSA Monograph 19) pp. 46-67.

84. See further R.B. Day, *Leon Trotsky and the Politics of Economic Isolation* (London, 1973). If capital is a world system how is it possible for the USSR to be free from its laws? Knei-Paz, p. 333n, rebukes Day for economism: but the logic of Trotsky's position is national despite Trotsky's political denials. In Trotsky's theorization of permanent revolution ("The Basic Postulates" in *Permanent Revolution*) the procedure is 1) permanent revolution in Russia, 2) international revolution. In the event of the failure of 2) Trotsky is forced back into 1). See also *Writings 1935-36*, p. 14.

85. E.g., Shachtman, in Trotsky's *New Course* (Ann Arbor, 1972), p. 234.

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Second, his analysis falters in the realm of political economy. The contention that relations of production are socialist but those of distribution bourgeois does violence to the basic Marxist principle that "the structure (*Gliederung*) of distribution is completely determined by the structure of production."[86] Such a separation is the antithesis of Marx's critical political economy, in which "every form of distribution disappears with the specific form of production from which it is descended and to which it corresponds."[87] As Howard summarizes the problem: "a moment's (Marxist) reflection points to the inadequacy of Trotsky's notion of Russia as a "degenerated workers' State." If, in spite of everything, Russia is still essentially a "workers' State," then the implication is that the elimination of private ownership and the replacement of the anarchy of capitalist production by the Plan are the essence of socialism. The "degeneration" would concern only the form, not the essence, of the Russian social formation. But this confuses the juridical form of property with the actual relations of production themselves. For Marx it is precisely these relations of production which determine the forms of distribution and their (deformed) superstructural reflection."[88] Finally, Trotsky's emphasis on distribution again indicates the presence of a distributive ethic.[89] These errors parallel some of Lenin's: substitutionism; poor political economy; and socialism understood as material equality.

Despite these basic mistakes in Trotsky's theory, it is to his credit that he concludes: "The question of the character of the Soviet Union (is) not yet decided by history."[90] This position is followed up in the 1939 decision that the fate of the USSR is to be decided by the outcome of the war.[91] If a radical reading of Trotsky is possible, it must focus on this period. For the present, let us note that Trotsky's position on the USSR reveals the limits of his historical method. His understanding of socialism-barbarism allows only for the revival of socialist democracy *or* for totalitarianism: he sees the war as the closing of his fifty year conjuncture, introducing either socialism or destroying civilization. The problem is blurred by the fact that Trotsky sees acceptance of the "third way" as endorsement of it as the "only way." He understands bureaucratic collectivism as a road to convergence theory — a *non sequitur* reminscent of Korsch. He seems to assume that to a certain extent the fate of the western working class is sealed in the USSR, a type of Soviet-centrism. The USSR sets the world pattern, world revolution depends on its future; though, on the other hand, world revolution can also save the USSR. Trotsky's position remains unelaborated, but the former notion at least is opposed to western Marxism, for which socialist revolution remains an untried experience, dependent precisely on the popular masses of late capitalism.

86. *Grundrisse*, pp. 95, 832.
87. *Capital*, Vol. 3, p. 883.
88. D. Howard, *The Marxian Legacy* (London, 1977), p. 265; see also his introduction to Castoriadis, *Telos* 23, p. 119.
89. *Revolution Betrayed*, pp. 57ff, ch. 6; Avenas, Part 2, p. 41.
90. *Revolution Betrayed* Ch. 9, sec. 3.
91. *In Defense of Marxism*, pp. 8ff.

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Coexisting with Trotsky's earthly view of socialism is another concept: socialism as paradise. There are elements of Marx's view here, the end of money, the State, division of labor,[92] but there is more. As previously mentioned, Trotsky's vision in the last few pages of *Literature and Revolution* is one of hyperactive Supermen socialists. Trotsky's error is not as unusual as it might at first seem. It is simply a refiguring of bourgeois humanism, or the inclination to view man as god the master. Man is essentially free and revolutionary: he can move rivers and mountains, populate the peaks and the ocean beds, perfect the human body and its creations.[93]

These two concepts of socialism in Trotsky *are* remotely connected: the binding thread connecting the two is the notion of the rationality of domination. In his minimum concept, rationalization facilitates control of productive forces; in the maximum, socialism is understood as universal control including the complete domination of nature.[94] Trotsky's is a schizoid socialism in which these two concepts coexist.[95] To use his own terminology, Trotsky lacks a transitional notion of socialism. The former concept becomes the immediate program, the latter, a dream.

Conclusions

The theory of permanent revolution, a profoundly *ideological* theory and the core of Trotsky's Marxism, is a clear contrast to the Marxism of Lenin. Unlike Trotsky, Lenin does not generally ideologize particular conjunctures, at least until the *21 Conditions* of the Comintern. Trotsky tends to rationalize or theorize all in the name of the Revolution; he is more the theoretician than Lenin, but this constitutes his major flaw in a situation in which theory does not lie with practice. In attempting to justify the expedient, Trotsky tends, particularly in the twenties, to justify incidentals theoretically: he lacks Lenin's flexibility. Where Lenin's tension is between theory and political flexibility, Trotsky's tension is one between orthodoxy and criticism. Because of this difference, it is easier to "save" Lenin than Trotsky: for flexibility is *part of Lenin's practice*, where in Trotsky we find only *textual* flexibility in the early and late periods. This is not to say that Lenin was a good theoretician but only that he was a good Machiavellian practitioner. Trotsky, in comparison, was neither.

Because of his lack of methodological rigor, Trotsky seizes on the worst elements of Marx's theory. Contemporary Trotskyism repeats and compounds this process. To better situate Trotsky's Marxism, consider his similarities

92. *Revolution Betrayed*, p. 64. See also *Literature and Art*, (New York, 1970); *Problems of Life* (Connecticut, 1973).

93. *Literature and Revolution*, pp. 254ff.

94. Cf. The Frankfurt critique, e.g., Habermas "Technology and Science as 'Ideology'," *Towards a Rational Society* (Boston, 1971).

95. Dunayevskaya, "Leon Trotsky," seems to suggest that this 'duality' — characterized here as 'schizoid' — is the central theme of *all* Trotsky's work. She couples: world revolution defense of USSR; socialism as utopia plus socialism as USSR, proletarian vanguard plus militarization of labor and so on (p. 178).

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with certain contemporaries. The parallel with Luxemburg has already been mentioned. Here we find all the elements of spontaneism, general strike, and so on. Trotsky also has something in common with the council tradition — a belief in the necessity of breakdown perceived as a show of revolutionary credentials.[96] This rationalism in Trotsky is linked to a certain technological determinism, prehaps prefiguring Khrushev: "if the further development of productive forces was conceivable within the framework of bourgeois society, then revolution would generally be impossible."[97]

Trotsky's faith in the onward march of productive forces inducing socialism is partially negated by the insertion of the party into the theory of permanent revolution. Trotsky's development here resembles Lukacs'.[98] In common, the two view the proletariat as a Hegelian actor. Though Trotsky does not theorize these problems, the two also share notions of false and imputed consciousness and the teleology therein. Subsequently, Trotsky and Lukacs share not only workerism and automatism, but also partyism and substitutionism.

Finally, the analysis of the later Trotsky resembles Korsch's convergence theory — socialism or barbarism read as barbarism or barbarism. Here convergence signals the death of Marxism.[99] Trotsky and Korsch are combined on the methodological plane — though the absence of specificity might be a greater contradiction in Korsch, given the advocacy of it in his *Karl Marx*. Certain differences notwithstanding,[100] Trotsky and Korsch together verge on replacing automatic revolution with automatic counter-revolution.

What is interesting in these parallels is that Trotsky overlaps with the *mistakes* of the others and only rarely with their respective strenghts. He mirrors either automatisms or idealisms, *reversing* these positions into disillusion in his last years. Again, the source of the problem is clearly methodological — "rethinking" here owes more to impressionism than to a careful reconstruction of the specificities of a changing world. Trotsky's mass popular perspective ends with his acceptance of Bolshevism. He trades off his critical faculties for the necessities of history, resigning from critical thought until his last years and then engaging it only cautiously and partially.

Trotsky's Marxism is paradigmatic of the dead weight of the past. Till 1917 Trotsky is dominated by the experience of 1905; in his last years, that of 1917. Before and after these periods Trotsky's Marxism possesses some critical perspectives. In the terms of this critical position, the period 1917-38 is a

96. R. Jacoby, "The Politics of the Crisis Theory," *Telos* 23, p. 29.
97. Trotsky, *The First Five Years of the Communist International* (New York, 1972), Vol. II, p. 4.
98. *History and Class Consciousness*, (London, 1971). Cf. Habermas, *Theory and Practice* (Boston, 1973), pp. 32ff.
99. D. Kellner, ed. *Karl Korsch — Revolutionary Theory* (Austin, Texas, 1977), ch. 8.
100. E.g., *Writings 1935-36*, p. 122, where Trotsky argues that fascism *restricts* productive forces.

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period of self-denial. Trotsky's relation to Marxism is determined less by reason than by the experience of history; yet in his thought rationalism and irrationalism co-exist uneasily. The binding thread of this schizoid couple is an ideological reading of the notion that history and not theory is the ultimate social tribunal. Trotsky's antinomies are bound together by the historicist idea that Marxism is no more than the reception of Marx. The reduction of theory to history explains both Trotsky's Bolshevik turn (victory) and his disillusion with the oncoming war (defeat). Both Trotsky's biography and his theory demonstrate Bolshevism's inability to perceive that consciousness is not necessarily consciously formed. How else can twenty years of self-denial be explained?

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THE INTELLECTUAL FILM: EISENSTEIN'S PLAN TO FILM MARX'S *CAPITAL**

by Yvette Biro

Not long ago an unknown manuscript surfaced from Eisenstein's estate: a diary consisting of notes on his plan to make a film of *Capital.*[1] The significance of these pages, which he dashed off at various odd times and in various odd locations (in cutting rooms, at his desk, etc.) as footnotes or memos on scratch paper, is greater than the eccentric and daring idea might suggest. Not only do they give us an insight into the young Eisenstein's always tumultuous, always ingenious workshop of a mind; they touch upon ways of using film language that have not been fully appreciated to this day.

Until the new manuscript came to light, Eisenstein's proposal to adapt *Capital* for the screen was never more than a fleeting reference, a half-serious joke. It was as though he had thought up the idea as a sensationalist stunt to support his views on the unlimited possibilities of film to prove that this unusual intellectual challenge was not beyond him. As far as anyone knew, he mentioned the idea for the first time in the 1930 written version of his famous Sorbonne lecture: "In the earliest time, the time of magic and religion, knowledge was both an emotional element and an element of collective wisdom. Then, with dualism, things got separated: on the one hand we had speculative philosophy, pure abstraction; on the other, pure emotion. We must now go back not to the primitive state (the religious stage), but to an analogous synthesis of emotional and intellectual elements. I think film alone is capable of making this great synthesis, of returning the intellect to its vital, concrete, emotional sources. That is our task and the path we have chosen. That will be the starting point of my new film, a film that will lead our workers and peasants to dialectic thinking. That film will be Marx's *Capital.*"[2] Thus, *Capital* excited him as an experiment *par excellence* in the intellectual film, its main challenge being the ambitious goal of teaching the masses to think.

But the notes tell us more. They reveal in detail the depths from which Eisenstein drew his earlier experiences and, more important, the creative method that attracted his imagination. The date itself is informative. At the end of 1927, just after he had finished *October* and while he was working on *The Old and the New* (that is, two or three years before the Sorbonne talk), he committed his fragmented thoughts to writing, incorporating the lessons he had learned from shooting *October*. We know that contemporary critics were much less complimentary to *October* than to *Potemkin*. They repeatedly

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*English translation by Gabor Kalman.

1. For an English translation of the diary see *October*, Summer 1976, pp. 3-26.
2. Leon Moussinac, *Eisenstein* (New York), p. 86.

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condemned and reviled him. Even as outstanding and sensitive a writer as Shklovsky, a leading formalist, was baffled by Eisenstein's innovations in film language and made ironic remarks about the dubious value of symbols in film writing. "It is as if," he writes, "the revolution were the creation of statues, mythological statues parading on rooftops, bronze, historical statues, or of lions and elephants at garden gates—in short, the creation of idols and house gods, a meeting of statuettes in a china shop."[3]

Finding himself at the center of many misunderstandings and much distrust, Eisenstein was forced to apply the scalpel to his methods and come up with an explanation of them. In his writings he constantly returned to one point or another, trying with stubborn consistency to prove its symbolic significance. His diary abounds with analyses of his previous films, analyses characterized by both ease of expression and objective precision. After the first sensence announcing his decision ("It's settled: we're going to film *Capital*, with Marx's script. It's the only logical solution.") he methodically examines the achievements of *Strike, Potemkin,* and *October* from the point of view of what they accomplish in terms of advancing the dialectical approach. What he is most concerned with is how to translate into film the *process* of thinking, the way moving images express abstract ideas. He correctly assumed that no one had ever done anything similar before. Where then could he find proof that his undertaking was neither absurd nor unfeasible?

If *Strike*, "an educational and methodological film on the methods of class struggle," necessitated a serial structure, *Potemkin* goes further in its dialectics by portraying more than the psychological, everyday aspect of pathos, that is, by probing its more abstract side as well. For Eisenstein the famous metaphor of the leaping lions is also "a leap from the representation of ordinary life to abstract and generalized imagery." And finally, *October* leads to a complete break with the factual and anecdotal. The film "treats the events of October not as events, but as the conclusion of a series of theses."

These concise characterizations generated a method as well as an idea. On the one hand Eisenstein is confronting the traditional practice of "narrative" film, whose only aim is to show us pictures of everyday life; on the other he is stating the innermost goal of his life's work, which was to elevate film to the heights of abstract, generalized imagery. The only way he could achieve his goal was to reject a story line in favor of the distinctive logic of abstract thought. He evaluates *October* accordingly. "After the drama, poem, ballad in film, *October* presents a new form: a collection of essays on a series of themes." In other words, it is a "thinking" film. Its tension lies in the interplay of thesis and antithesis, and it is impregnated by a truth that rationalizes, reevaluates its optical devices, making them new and different. Eisenstein's dream is the creation of a cinematic treatise, mediation, dissertation. Are we justified then in treating the project frivolously? Not at all. He clearly meant

3. *Sovetskii ekran*, July 1929.

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to use *Capital* as his *libretto*, a base on which he could build his own thought structures.

"Bestial Banality"

The foremost problem Eisenstein had to face was one of determining the proper material for his cinematic ideas. What could give them body? What could shape them into visual imagery? In the course of normal verbal composition thought follows its own logical path. It progresses by means of statement, counterstatement, conclusion, etc. But once we reject the anecdote—a story borrowed from literature or the theater—what is the language of cinematic thought?

Though Eisenstein dismisses plot with a sure hand, he instinctively feels that action—simple, straightforward action—must be preserved. Here he makes some rather surprising prescriptions: one must definitely remain within the bounds of banality; by using modest settings, one can refrain from unusual or startling leapfrogging and avoid overstylization. Like most great artists Eisenstein realized that there was nothing more exciting than the gradual discovery of ordinary things. Only by penetrating events slowly and patiently can we accept them as an excuse for observing what is liberating in them and create new events and concepts. The effect is catalytic, a stage in a never-ending chain reaction leading to the territory of the untried, uncharted imagination. As an example he cites an arbitrary day in the life of a man. Everything that happens to this man serves only as a starting point, a springboard from facts to generalizations. Though aware that this kind of schematic approach entails the danger of primitive symbolism (and who would not be tempted by easy, cheap symbolic connections with the commonplace?), he never loses sight of the example of that great master, Joyce, who was able to proceed smoothly from the trivial problem of lighting a kerosene lamp to metaphysical disquisitions.

Combing the daily press, Eisenstein collected a storehouse of materials for his "great project." The suicide of a crippled war veteran in Paris affected him in much the same way as the cynical god-like ministrations of an Aga Khan or an Oxford rugby star blessing his throng of worshippers or the starving masses of Shanghai flinging themselves in front of streetcars in protest. If we study his interests carefully, we will be surprised to find that the "eccentric" Eisenstein—though naturally drawn to "attractions" and the symbolic—seeks out the well known rather than the sensational. He speaks of "bestial banality" to give the abstraction flesh and blood. He thinks in simple scenes: a church, the stock exchange. "A thousand minute details" say more than any commentary. But he goes even further. Even a few inches of silk stocking may be worthy of investigation. After all, a silk stocking can call forth a host of related images, and the connections, parallels, and ramifications thus generated can bring the whole fabric of a social order into focus. If in *Ulysses* a bowl of soup can set off an explosion of the most remote association—including the entire British fleet—why not construct a film on

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the basis of Joycean technique?

The reason Eisenstein makes so much of the necessity for banality is that the plot should not be overpowering, it should not attract too much attention to itself. The final goal is much more important. The story line should be nothing more than a crutch, a column supporting the basic structure of generalizations and abstractions. In other words, the lighter the weight of the episodic or dramatic material, the heavier the load of conceptual material it can bear and the greater its intellectual capacity.

At one point Eisenstein toys with various ways of expressing the conservatism in the German working woman: he felt that conservatism to be an important obstacle to the revolution. Since a good German wife is known for never letting her husband leave the house without a bowl of hot soup, he made a bit of kitchen-sink trivia the first in a complex series of images moving back and forth from cooking pot to smelly surroundings, from spices to Cayenne plantations where it is grown. Then, in increasingly daring metaphorical jumps, images of Dreyfus, French chauvinist behavior, and finally war flash on the screen. Before long the soup acquires a symbolic meaning: once it appears often enough, it becomes the lukewarm soup of opportunism, the betrayal of the working class. Now what meaning, what coherent content do these images suggest? Eisenstein's goal is extremely ambitious: to provide visual counterparts for historical connections and social and political systems by juxtaposing distances far removed from one another in space and time and making the concrete collide radically with the abstract. "Differentiate between each part of the material and bring them to the same final conclusion," he writes. And that conclusion is class consciousness. Later he gives an even more illuminating description of his methods of visualization, referring to them as "a series of stylistically self-contained themes, each of which might serve as the starting point for an ideologically closed meaning, but which by itself is optimally multifold and thus creates a maximum of contrasts."

The Serial Technique

Now we come to the other cornerstone of Eisensteinian thought: the necessity of pointing up contradictions and conflicts. Whatever Eisenstein touched, his mind worked in terms of shock confrontations. When a pictorial event or slice of life acquired a metaphoric value for him, it was because he sensed a certain tension in it and played up its dynamics. The next step was always to locate an appropriate image to follow it. As a result he was constantly on the lookout for pairs of opposing but connected visual phenomena. But his vision encompassed far more than showy parallels between pictorial events. He could perceive structure in moving compositions that were simultaneously vertical and horizontal. The first commandment of film-making is the faithful transferral of the dynamics of thought into motion. The result is always a dynamic wave of associations, an infinite free flow—but a free flow backed by a tenacious set of rules.

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The diary itself exemplifies this process. All we have to do is take a look behind the seemingly capricious chains of thought and we discover that even though the associations are playful they are also intellectually highly structured; even though they are diffuse they are goal-oriented. It is almost as if Eisenstein were unconsciously trying to illustrate the duality he wished to create in his films. An intelligent, restlessly mobile structure emerges from under a fragmented surface.

Eisenstein's ideas on the nature of his association technique throws light on an as yet little studied aspect of his work. It is a technique with a mechanism all its own. Human consciousness can form thought within a strictly circumscribed freedom of space. Yet this space is multidimensional and therefore richer than gradual, linear, one-dimensional progress. "The continuity of a series [of images] should by no means be 'sequential' as in a plot, unfolding in a logically progressive manner. An associative unfolding."

This way of thinking so excited Eisenstein because it led to a cluster of disparate phenomena around a single, concrete, objective nucleus. He used it as the basis for his own serial technique, whose originality can be matched only by the most extravagant achievements of the avant-garde in the twenties. Although there were attempts in the early days of film aesthetics to draw analogies to avant-garde trends in music, Eisenstein was the only one who understood them clearly enough to use them for his own structural ends. When he stresses the order of internally logical associations, disregarding chronology built on simple continuity, when he evokes life-like images in a series of whimsically fluctuating ideas organized around well defined focal points, when he abandons traditional narrative expression, his accomplishments are no less significant than those of his great contemporary Schoenberg. By discarding the traditional structural hierarchy in favor of a free association of elements of equal rank and import, he creates a unique dynamic balance. He juxtaposes and connects his images in the most unexpected ways: germs of thought that later become central to the film keep coming together and branching out. The many layers of rich meaning result from the complex, segmented nature of the structure. They have little to do with the development of a story line (which in music would correspond to the melody). By stripping away linearity, Eisenstein gave free rein to a new vitality of composition and thought.

From Image to Ideography

A multidimensional structure based on a free time-space relationship naturally transforms its own building blocks. Eisenstein spent a great deal of time and effort trying to come to grips with the problem of elevating the "bestially banal" concrete to the abstract, that is, ridding it of its narrow literal quality. Other pioneers of the early Soviet silent film also realized that by separating the material they wished to photograph into small, well-defined units they could create the foundation for a new type of composition. Dziga Vertov, for example, dreamt of the possibility of creating an "ideal man"

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from his footage of beautiful hands, heads, and legs, piecing him together according to his own ideals. But it was Eisenstein who developed the idea to its logical conclusion; it was Eisenstein who tried to move from the literal image of an object to its symbolic image, from showing an object to evoking a concept. He arranges objects and events in such an order, links them in such a way that what comes to the fore is how the relationships he imposes on them interact, not what they are in and of themselves. As he himself once wrote, he focuses on deductions and conclusions. Take, for example, the often cited sequence of god images in *October*. What was the aim, what was the meaning of so long a sequence? It was Eisenstein's attempt at concept creation. Stepping out of their accustomed haunts, the gods and idols that follow one another no longer appear on the screen to be individual images of god; they have become the embodiment of godhood. Eisenstein creates his symbolism, his latent meanings by sequential order: the picture paradoxically ceases to exist as such; it becomes a sign, a mediator that can be grasped only in the context of the whole. So emphatic is his lack of continuity of action and disregard for customary chronology that he forces the viewer to search for meaning beyond the image. Each series of images becomes in effect a writing system, that is, each series of images develops its own ideography.

Even more interesting perhaps is the same technique in the equally famous milk separator sequence in *The Old and the New*. The event itself could not be more banal: a group of peasants are trying out a new machine. As they crowd around it, some are doubtful, others hopeful, still others neutral, merely curious. Eisenstein, however, does not follow their reactions with naturalistic fidelity; on the contrary, he condenses and polarizes the interplay of doubts and hopes to such an extent that in the end it decomposes into two extreme states: joy (confidence) and sadness (disappointment). In other words, he reduces the many faces of natural events to two opposing components. The alternating images recur in an ever increasing rhythm until a saturation point is reached and they take on a broader, more generalized validity. The balance between loss and gain is still positive: Eisenstein reduces the message of the total image to signs in order to put across a totality of abstraction.

Eisenstein speaks of a new methodology, new structures of film word, film image, and film phrase for his version of *Capital*. He felt it his duty to conquer this intellectual territory—previously assumed beyond the pale of the film—and raise it to the stature of intellectual ideology. And if the only way to do it was "to generalize random facts into concepts," then what had to be emphasized was the relationship between facts, not the facts themselves. Eisenstein elevates the content of the image to a level well above factural reality and treats it as an abstract symbol of sovereignty beside concrete phenomena, thus creating his own dialectic of building montages.

In the very process of establishing these interrelationships, setting up juxtapositions made Eisenstein acutely aware of the possibility of finely differentiated variations in montage constructions. "It is interesting to note,"

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he writes, "that the gods sequence and the sequence of Kerensky's ascent are structurally one and the same: identity of pictorial fragments and semantic crescendo of intertitles in the latter and identity (implied) of intertitles ("God," "God," "God") and sematic diminuendo of fragments in the former."

As yet he makes no mention of differentiating among various kinds of montages. What captivates him is the thought-transmitting ability of a combination of "neutral" elements lacking in organic continuity (film words). At the same time he always had a sense for the extraordinarily rich possibilities inherent in the editing process and always looked for polar oppositions while putting together his footage. In this period of his career he was overwhelmed by the power of iconoclasm image breaking: he rose with great gusto to the challenge of using an image, any image in a manner contrary to its literal meaning, that is, as a premise or sign. When he called for "tearing out a piece by the ax of the lens," he was not alluding to spectacular effects. What he had in mind was a means of condensing the image with such force that it would turn into a sign and make sense only in a series of compositions of his own choosing, thus testing how far he could go in destroying the primary content of the image. The Buddha and the porcelain figurine, the African totem and the monumental mass of the apostolic king all have their "own" meanings, but the rhythm and order Eisenstein uses to cut them together play down the literal meaning and give them a typically Eisensteinian tension. The growing series of images, the accumulation of like elements leads to a clearer, more focused, yet broader concept: the abstract idea of the idol or deity itself. The reason Eisenstein talks about semantic diminuendo is that the essence of his approach lies in focusing many disparate elements into one ultimate concept.

The gods sequence and the Kerensky sequence are alike in that the basic device of both is repetition. But while in the gods sequence Eisenstein develops meaning by bringing to life similarities hidden in differences, in the Kerensky sequence he uses similarity—sameness relentlessly reasserting itself—to point up an invisible, abstract truth: the inevitability of Kerensky's rise to power given his ambition. Today we may argue as to whether the constant repetition of the image of Kerensky ascending the stairs is all that ingenious. Slicker, more clever ideas have been invented since. What still does attract our attention is Eisenstein's experimentation with the problems involved in composing a series of images and determining the sort of content it is to have. In itself an image has little significance. It acquires significance only after being set in motion and fitted into a higher order of things.

Several years later Eisenstein himself admitted he had often gone too far with the word-sentence frame-montage analogy, that using the frame as a sign had tempted him to go overboard. He cites the example of the forced comparison he had drawn between harps and the Mensheviks. Although this period of naive contrasts passed quickly and the somewhat baroque images it produced soon faded into the background, the theory behind it remained essentially unchanged: the montage was not merely an instrument of

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sensationalism; it was an instrument of speech, an instrument for developing ideas, a syntax for the language of film.

Eisenstein Equals Collision

This laconic definition originated with the master himself. Examining the possibilities open to montage, calculating its range of applicability, he arrived at the conclusion that there are only two basic principles of editing: linkage and collision. Collision is what counts—bringing events to the boiling point, making them explode the rectangular prison of images, heightening their intensity and tension within the frame. As he enumerates the various fields for collision, he has flashes of sensitivity to form and composition that even today, fifty years later, remain unexplored. Hastily he notes formulas for colliding graphic directions, scales, volumes, masses, depths; for collisions between light and shade, objects and dimensions, events and their duration. We are far from working out all the possibilities montage has to offer. Much is yet to be done: there are any number of collisions waiting to be set up.

Montage, Eisenstein once said, was like a series of explosions in an internal combustion engine. Brutal confrontations, conflicts, and explosions also characterize his ideas and the workings of his fantasy in these early notes. Never before in his writings had it been so obvious that it was not a grammar he was trying to devise but a much tighter "sentence structure," a syntax attempting to organize modes of transition and combination rather than elementary construction. Though willing to concede that transition could involve shifting into a different rhythm or event, he felt that the constrast it provided was more important. What he was after was "the opposite, not merely something different. A given theme always has a generalized image, but that image in turn always has an opposite." When in a complex series of conditioned reflexes he pauses at the connection between the stiumlus and the final link in the chain, he chooses the point at which all interaction has apparently ceased, that is, the point at which a head-on collision of contrasting intellectual biases can create a new type of connection, a new bridge (e.g., "terribly crude" erotic images coupled with images of lofty spirituality). This is the basis of his well-known shock-effect technique—leading the viewer to a state in which instead of frozen images he finds meaning tinged with emotional content.

Antifilm

The boldness of Eisenstein's creative imagination lies in its unmistakable freedom, the freedom with which he builds his own universe according to his own clear-cut ideas and contrary to all tradition. No devices or methodologies ever prevented him from making his ideas innovative, provocative. His imagination was alive with ideas culled from literature, but it also found room for puppet plays, the drawings of Daumier, historical surveys, didactic slogans in the Proletcult spirit, and farces by Boccaccio, La Fontaine, and Rabelais. Far from hiding this aspect of his versatility, he reveled in its

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spectacular hybrids. But he also realized that structures of this kind required a wholly different continuity, a continuity based on free association rather than the discursive principles of ordinary logical deduction.

Collecting material for his documentaries or film essays—a structure whose heterogeneous wealth included filler items from the daily news—led Eisenstein to construe the intellectual film as the exact opposite of the traditional film. While the latter depicted a single action from various points of view, thereby turning montage into a strictly formal device, the new film gave a montage of a single viewpoint based on a variety of actions. And what could that viewpoint be but the manifestation of an outlook, an attitude, a way of thinking? Now we are in a position to understand the internal workings of Eisenstein's plan to make a film of *Capital*: he was never concerned with bringing events, themes, or even abstract statements to the screen; his main goal was to formulate a "visual technique of the dialectic method."

We can best appreciate the grandiosity of Eisenstein's concept if we keep in mind that a worthy exponent has yet to come along and put it into practice. In the fifties ventures in the genre of the film essay were quite fashionable, but no one even approached the substance and structure of film with comparable daring and inventiveness. Perhaps this is because no one could lay claim to an overall idea, a philosophical grasp of the matter at hand. Sketchy observations, documentary-like notes, and modest newsreel imitations were a poor substitute. Eisenstein realized that freedom of creativity also means the freedom to use a broad spectrum of genres, styles, devices, and approaches, and he had no trouble sustaining this multiplicity: he found unity at a deeper level and integrated it successfully into his work.

It has taken fifty years for Eisenstein's "absurd" ideas to come into their own. Only today has film-making reached a mature enough stage to challenge the limitations of the traditional literary film and seek out its own independent self-fulfilling function. In this context Eisenstein's plan to film *Capital* is more than a historical curiosity; it has something exciting to tell us today because of the precision with which it defines the role of the intellect in the film-making process.

Emotional Thinking

More than anything else Eisenstein was searching for a synthesis of the intellectual and the emotional. His film treatise obviously involves more than mere academic theorizing or the barren illustration of an idea or thought. "I think that intellectual attraction by no means excludes 'emotionality.' After all, a reflex action is perceived as the so-called presence of an effect." Ideas must be understood in terms of an affective shock-truth. Eisenstein the intellectual knew better than his colleagues of today that a film should never aim at reducing or reconstructing rational logic. When he speaks of the unity of affective and logical elements, he is also stressing the clear-cut distinction that needs to be made between them. Montage structure can be effective only if it can ferret out the mysterious laws of "emotional discourse." That is why

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those who were afraid of Eisenstein's fantasy, labeling it overwrought and utopian, are wrong. On the one hand Eisenstein spoke of the "logic of the emotions;" on the other he held that thought does not follow the objective rules of hard facts, that it has its own deeply-felt inner meaning assigned to it by its creator, who wishes his audience to accept it.

Eisenstein was hoping to endow the monumental fabric of *Capital* with this kind of "inner monologue," or rather to internalize its abstract, scientific truth. He thus approached even this purely theoretical work from the standpoint of emotional thinking. His creative genius was decades ahead of its time. No wonder then that both his theoretical and his artistic works were misunderstood.

It was with a mixture of perspicacity and scepticism that Eisenstein resigned himself to the fact that the left of his day was not yet ready for his brand of intellectual adventure. And a real tragedy it was too, he complained, accusing his contemporaries of lack of experience in the practice of logical reasoning and intolerance of the analytic approach. "They have fallen into the sin of one-sided demands for synthesis." Nor did they appreciate the interdependence between "contemplative analysis" and "emotional synthesis." They expected guidance and direction instead of a thought-liberating, mind-enriching methodology.

Anyone with a serious interest in the most advanced theoretical and practical achievements of today's filmmakers—Pasolini, Godard, the American experimentalists—must also take a serious interest in Eisenstein. Perhaps the time has finally come to study and follow Eisenstein's method. Film has the means to become the most powerful medium of communication ever. Eisenstein's example is only beginning to come into its own.

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NOTES AND COMMENTARY:

AN INTERVIEW WITH JUERGEN HABERMAS*

by Angelo Bolaffi

1. *Critical Potentials within Society.*

Q: There is much discussion on the nature and causes of the crisis now shaking all advanced capitalist countries. Let's see if it is possible to define its structural characteristics and draw an initial balance sheet of their phases.

A. By now everyone is conscious of the fact that we are not dealing with a brief recession and that unemployment will remain a problem until the 1980s. In this context then, what becomes interesting is the reaction of workers' consciousness to this phenomenon: in Germany, the crisis has had a disciplining effect. On the basis of social security guaranteed by law, the government has apparently succeeded in nipping any protest movement in the bud. This fact has not only the immediate consequence of ruling out any extreme electoral outcome, but also broader implications: it evokes in the population a fundamentally conservative sentiment that finds a cultural echo among intellectuals and in party rhetoric. This neo-conservative current, which had already made its appearance in the early 1970s, has been enormously reinforced by this economic background.

Q: In 1973, at the Goethe Institute in Rome, you gave a lecture entitled "Was heisst heute Krise?" Today, five years later, I ask you what does the "crisis" mean?

A: In recent years it has become clear that the mechanism of the crisis still has its origin in the economic system but that the Welfare State no longer allows the crisis to come to light in an *immediately* economic form. Rather, during periods of recession and high unemployment, the attempt toward cultural and social integration is where critical phenomena can take place. Recent years have confirmed my belief that it is not possible to convert tendencies towards economic crises into political actions, not even in strata of organized labor acting rationally and according to goals, trade unions, or, in our case, the Social Democratic Party. These critical tendencies come about in a very mediated way that overloads the mechanisms of social and cultural integration. This means that a higher "ideological investment" is needed today than in periods of capitalist development with low unemployment. This ideological investment moves in two directions: on the one hand, the work ethic is emphasized, i.e., we witness the rehabilitation of competitive behaviors, a race for performances, and exhortation of virtues which are simply connected with high mobility on the labor market. This means that it is necessary to teach people to accept jobs they would not willingly do otherwise. Therefore, the emphasis falls on instrumental values and achievement orientation, and this orientation penetrates even into the first school years. The other direction requiring an "ideological investment" relates to the revitalization of traditional values concerning primarily family life and the integrating of a private sphere, which then finds its literary reflection in a new subjectivism—a certainly pleasant rebirth of lyrics and romance, to replace critico-analytical, specialized, sociological or political works. It is a way of reacting rhetorically against bureaucratization and the negative effects of capitalist growth. I think we need to take seriously

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*The following interview was conducted by Angelo Bolaffi at the Max Planck Institut that Habermas has been directing for a number of years. It was published by *Rinascita* in Nos. 30 and 31 (July 28 and August 4, 1978). Translated by Eleni Mahaira-Odoni.

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that part of right-wing propaganda that hits upon real needs and offers a conservative interpretation to real problems. In the case of the critique of bureaucratism, as well as in the re-evaluation of traditional life-forms, i.e., in the spontaneous reactions not only against environmental destruction but also against dangers connected with the atomic industry, and even in the case of reactions against administratively introduced educational reforms, there emerges a basic problem that has played a central role both in Marx and in Weber. The problem is that, as an aftermath of capitalist development and of an obviously politically undirected process of accumulation, little by little, the limited form of economic rationality, as well as that of administrative rationality functional to this economic system, penetrate into increasingly broader spheres of life; at the same time they restructure them even though, by themselves, they have an affinity to become practical or expressive forms of life. In conclusion, we can say that most of the "ideological investment" I mentioned aims at giving a conservative interpretation of problems that are actually secondary and dysfunctional effects of a politically uncontrolled capitalist growth.

Q: It seems here that there is a place in this schema for the apparently unpolitical phenomena of protest that seem to characterize the current phase of political life in Western countries.

A: The novelty here in Germany—perhaps it is different in Italy—lies in the fact that the potential for protest that dominated the scene between the late 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s, which grew out of universities to reach strata of young workers and apprentices, has been silenced. This, too, has to be included among the disciplining effects of the crisis. In its place we have, on the one hand, the emergence of terrorism and, on the other, the not so dramatic but very emotional currents of a neo-populist protest. The latter express the fact that traditional parties and trade-union bureaucracies are unable to channel relevant themes and conflicts adequately and of reducing them to specific problems. I see those protests as signs of a dissatisfaction that manifests itself as alienation from the party system as such. We already have other indicators in this direction: for example, we know of opinion polls indicating that in every case a significant part of the population is unhappy with the party system as a whole and not with this or that party, or with this or that political line. For West Germany this is the first time this has happened since the war. No doubt, it has already happened in other countries that such potentials for protest have been channeled in a petty-bourgeois direction. For now, this has not happened here, and we are still at first efforts toward founding ecological, "green" parties. Nonetheless, I am convinced that, when such currents become organized into parties, it becomes apparent that such potentials for protest cannot be strictly organized. They are characterized precisely by the fact that they cannot be expressed in the form of parliamentary protest channeled and interpreted by the parties without resulting in a feeling of fraud at the base.

Q: In other words, you think that in this case it would be impossible or unrealizable to organize or "parliamentarize" these protests?

A: We are dealing with heterogeneous potentials for protest which are difficult to analyze, e.g., anti-nuclear movements or civil initiatives (*Bürgerinitiativen*) formed under the stimulus of the most diverse occasions—as in the case of opposing at the neighborhood level a highway threatening to destroy or cross a residential section. If we search for the causes motivating such protest, I would say that, first of all, we find a reaction against procedures with administrative means. Let's take, for example, the reactions to school reforms: in this case, parents react to the dispossessing of what

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they have always considered as a field that *naturally belongs to them* and which has instead been taken away from them by the broadening of administrative interventions into culture. For this reason I am not so sure that there would not be a similar reaction against "right-wing" reforms: what provokes reactions is the administrative form of intervention rather than the specific contents. If we ask ourselves whether there is something uniting these protest movements, I would say that during recent years sensitivity has evidently increased and, with it, the disposition to protest against what I have called secondary dysfunctional effects of capitalist growth. This means that there has been a growth in the consciousness of capitalist "infiltration" into sectors of everyday life which had been hitherto securely guarded by tradition against the values of capitalist society (career orientation, competitiveness, instrumentalism, etc.) These are currents which do not represent the classical potential for protest as outlined by Marxism, even though workers are also involved. But the social composition is heterogeneous. For example, in the struggle against nuclear centers there is a mixture of the conservative peasant components but also of the agrarian establishment like pharmacists, teachers, doctors and lawyers. On the same side, there is also a left-wing component of students and young workers: the heirs of 1968.

Q: But I don't believe that this schema is also valid for the women's movement, which is now a world phenomenon.

A: In many respects, the women's movement is structurally distinct from this process. First, it naturally represents a much greater potential. It does not live by means of occasional motivations but starts from a central problem—equality of rights. Secondly, it belongs as much to the bourgeois tradition of emancipation as to the socialist one. From the ideological viewpoint, it can be placed among the great movements oriented toward universalistic values, at least partly. This is not true of the other movements.

Q: But women go beyond the demand for equality (and here this movement meets critiques of Marxism as a simple theory of social equality). They speak of liberation.

A: There are obvious similarities with neo-populism. The social conflict behind the women's movement is tied to the fact that the capitalist economic process has violated a reserve which is still protected in some way by the family in Western societies, and by the middle classes in particular. It is clear that women today are beginning to be part of the reserve army of the labor market—something that up to now happened predominantly with the working class—and that this process is constantly engulfing larger bourgeois strata. Therefore, this is a parallel conflict which, however, can no longer be interpreted in a traditional way. There is also a radical point of difference with respect to other movements. The latter can be interpreted, so to speak, in the light of a conversation or of a restoration of that which has been. For women, however, there is no chance in that direction, there is no return, there is no *status quo ante* which could be desirable or which should be re-established: for this reason the women's movement contains *a priori* a critical potential.

Q: But if such conflicts do not immediately reproduce the classical Marxian picture of class conflict, they are still derived from structural causes tied to capitalist development. Consequently, the political task of reconnecting causes and effects in praxis and consciousness becomes much larger.

A: For us, as Marxists, there is the problem of interpreting the experiences articulated by these movements in a manner such that our reading can be accepted by those immediately mobilized: how to make credible our hypothesis according to which these movements are phenomena caused by a politically uncontrolled capitalist

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development? For, if this does not happen, these potentials for protest can then be channeled very easily inside a conservative law and order party: for example, German Christian Democrats and even the Bavarian CSU employ the expression "human administration" to exploit in a conservative direction the critical potential of the anti-bureaucracy reaction. Such a prospect is not yet imminent. I do not believe that these critical potentials are able to produce by themselves organizations capable of acting according to their goal. By themselves, the only thing they can produce is a *rupture*, i.e., under certain circumstances, a rupture dysfunctional to the system of organized parties. And if we should come to the point where such a tendency to rupture were gaining strength, it would then be decisive who would be able to react and in what way. In principle, there are two possible reactions: one that leads to a strong decentralization in the formation of the political will and to an involvement of spheres of life which until now had been simply considered private and non-political. The other possible reaction is in the direction of a party of law and order which can resolve these problems administratively and simply use the protests as legitimation for a postponement of democratic rights.

Q: There seems to be outlined here an "extremist" road that oscillates between autonomy and corporatism, between the defense of this radical otherness as form and content of a political strategy and, at the same time, as use and expansion of the "Welfare State" model: in other words, a road between the rejection of politics as an absolute form of mediation-integration and the corporate use of some conquests and of some political spaces.

A: The challenge to and possibly the evasion of central bureaucracies is a highly ambivalent process. It can develop equally, either in the direction of a neo-fascist corporatism, or it can reinforce anarchistic tendencies that would provoke reactions nobody desires. I want to reiterate that it is not a matter of a process free of dangers to be blindly supported. By this I mean that there is a problem, and in confronting it the parties of the left must react rationally. *How* they should react is certainly not easy to say. On the one hand, they should undertake a practice of "enlightenment" so that critical potentials do not degenerate in a corporative direction. Secondly, to the extent that the competition with other parties allows for this and within the limits of a very centralized state apparatus, the parties of the left should decentralize and make their own organizing forms flexible in order to be really ready *to absorb and take advantage* of these autonomous critical potentials. The earlier this is done, the more it will be possible to stop critical potentials from becoming destructive if left on their own. This is merely my own hypothesis, since I do not possess nice and ready recipes. If I may speak of things that I only know from far away, I think that the Italian Communist Party can also find itself in a critical situation in which it could become the functional equivalent of an authoritarian party of order. This will be much less likely to occur the more the Italian Communist Party will be in a position to decentralize within its own organizational structure, even if it is clear that, at first glance, this limits its freedom of decision and *Spielraum*. I am well aware that every bureaucracy has its own rational effects. Therefore, there are no easy solutions. I can only hope that the Italian Communist Party will be able to provide a positive example on how to react to these potentials. Of course, we have not even mentioned terrorism yet, which renders all of these questions immensely more difficult.

Q: But there is also confronting these critical potentials the emergence of a neo-liberal ideology which proposes, in words, to simply shift back the hands in the

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clock of history to, say, before Keynes, and actually seeks to instrumentalize the crisis of the Welfare State in order to impose a definite line of economic policy.

A: On the part of the right, the real conflict is between Keynesianism and a new monetarism or Friedmann-type orientations. Of course, this has its political equivalent in ideas that aim at the demolition of the Welfare State and at the limitation of the bureaucracy. Should such a line prevail, then the trade unions, even in West Germany, will have no other alternative but to develop an offensive strategy: what would resurface would be the classical type of conflict which remains hidden under the veil of neo-Keynesianism. It is almost impossible to imagine a dismantling of the Welfare State which would not provoke reactions on the part of the classical labor organizations. Precisely for this reason, I do not consider it probable or imminent. It seems more likely that we will continue to go on the best we can, perhaps for worse rather than better, under modified Keynesian forms. A government wishing to proceed differently would have to be able to mobilize very strong conservative potentials and in that case we would find ourselves in a situation very different from the present, i.e., far advanced toward the mobilization of fascistoid potentials. I think I can say that in the near future, the economic system will manage to live quite well with these difficulties. The fact is that they will manage to render "normal" what seemed like an explosive event a few years ago. On one condition, however: that the social security system will hold. This is currently under stress and it certainly is not easy to keep it on its feet at the present level. And yet, it is exactly this shifting ahead of the conflict in the temporal dimension which makes possible the preservation of social peace. Capitalism's capacity for adaptation is very strong: it is incredibly flexible and I should say that until now it has used reserves from the very cultural and motivational dimensions. It is surprising how it has been capable of putting together forms of social integration. After all, this is the old 1930s idea of the Frankfurt School theoreticians: when they came to the U.S. they realized that what needed explaining was not so much the phenomena of crisis but rather capitalism's capacity for integration and, in particular, the mechanisms of cultural integration. Today, I still find this problematic formulation of the greatest importance. Conflicts are provoked by economic mechanisms fairly well known by now. The real unknown is, *how* are they mitigated, controlled or shifted toward sectors and zones marginal to the system, and what is the price paid to that end: what other conflicts are brought into play to replace the central one? The real, indeed, the only, question is whether economic problems will become of such magnitude that this model thriving on "small crises" will be unable to function any longer and, consequently, precipitate a crisis of classic dimensions. It remains to be seen how all this is going to end. But, on the other hand, in view of the strong probabilities of a fatal outcome, I do not think we could lightheartedly wish or hope for a "great crisis."

2. *Crisis and Democracy.*

Q: Perhaps we need to develop a different analysis for Italy and maybe also for other Mediterranean European countries where there are differences in the role, the weight, and the strategy of the labor movements as well as in the margin of economic policy. In any event, what you have said supports the thesis—already outlined by Gramsci—concerning the enormous expansion of the political dimension *since the end of the 1920s, and of the possibilities for the bourgeoisie to politically use the crisis. This has resulted in the definitive defeat of economistic readings of Marx's work, though they seem to re-emerge among "orthodox" positions against which you have explicitly*

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polemicized.

A: What differentiates my analysis from the traditional Marxist one consists in the fact that today, by using the tools of the critique of political economy, we still presuppose the autonomy of a self-reproducing economic system. This is something I do not believe. In fact, precisely because of this, the laws of the economic system are no longer identical to those analyzed by Marx. Obviously, this does not mean that the analysis of this mechanism is incorrect, but that it remains valid only insofar as the interference from the political system is left out. I consider the problem an empirical one which could be answered in principle, yet one about which we still have not developed adequate analyses. It is a very complex system which brings about the interaction between economy, politics and culture. We might say that we would need a functional equivalent of Marx's theory. But we do not have it. As for the internal mechanisms of the economic system pure and simple, one can say that today they are relatively transparent and that there is no further need for a critique of ideology. Anyone watching television newsreels is given enough to understand that West Germany, for example, follows an economic policy of global planning, and that it seeks to influence investments through indirect means. As a consequence, decisions unfavorable to the working population are implemented in order to "create jobs," in fact, to re-launch the process of accumulation. It is quite clear that entrepreneurs seek to exploit the current difficult situation to their own advantage.

Q: I do not really think that everything is so clear to everybody: even in Italy, where consciousness and class struggle are definitely farther ahead than in Germany, from a strictly economic viewpoint at least, the thesis advanced by certain entrepreneurial sectors whereby there will be more investments and jobs if workers were satisfied with lower wages, is not perceived as patently false.

A: Sure, there is a whole series of economic statements and phrases in need of criticism. I only meant to say that the problem of global planning is pretty obvious. From this viewpoint the system has grown more transparent. If, instead, we consider the interweaving of economic mechanisms with the political and cultural ones, then we must say that they have become more complex and impenetrable even to specialized scientists.

Q: We agree that there is a parallel between the economic crisis and the development of phenomena of identity crisis. We are in the midst of a rationality crisis. The real problem we should be interested in is why such processes do not translate purely and simply into a legitimation crisis.

A: For now, I would still speak of *tendencies* toward a crisis. The difficulty of administratively overcoming the tendencies toward an economic crisis are under everybody's eyes. From this, however, does not actually follow a strong de-legitimating effect. At least here in West Germany, the management of economic policy has been publicly staged in a very effective way. The immediate consequences of this staging are, on the one hand, the processes of intimidation and disciplining that we talked about; on the other hand, they seem to signify an intensification of cynicism or of a cynical attitude to how the system functions and how it redistributes its costs. In other words, there is a certain estrangement of the political system, of *Staatsverdrossenheit*, whose indicators we have already analyzed. On the other hand, we cannot speak of a legitimation crisis: people actually continue to vote, and the overwhelming majority votes for traditional parties. On the contrary, if we overlook the phenomenon of terrorism and its effects of moderate-reactionary stabilization, a legitimation crisis would imply either stronger polarization within established parties or even the

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formation of a new party with goals transcending the economic system. And this will not occur, at least not until neo-populist currents grow to a very different consistency and to represent a really strong challenge; or not until the situation we have just referred to has been cleared up, i.e., until the government implements, for economic reasons, an economic policy that openly challenges the trade unions.

Q: When you spoke of the "de-legitimation" crisis, you stated that the broadened possibilities for democratic action by citizens would help to prevent a possible disintegration of society. But, is a democratic answer to the crisis of complex society really possible, or does not this very complexity imply that it be directed by specialists and decisions that are heteronomous with respect to citizens? Is it likely that the "non-governability" of Western democracies favors a real democratization, let's say, a socialization of politics, or is the victory of experts, of technology and of complexity over democracy inevitable?

A: In my opinion, a major democratization, in the sense of decentralizing present decision-mechanisms, and a more discursive involvement of will formation, of decisions hitherto made privately or administratively, would have two aspects. On the one hand, it could certainly be paid with a loss in efficiency. It does not *have* to be so necessarily, but it *can* be. This is the objection advanced today by systems theoreticians. They claim that complex systems can change their mode of functioning and be based on participatory decision processes, but only at the price of their efficiency and rationality. There is so much truth in this objection that a Marxist discussion should consider the following question: whether under present conditions, socialism can still mean a *total* democratic restructuring of the economic system from top to bottom, i.e., a transformation of capitalist economy according to self-management models. I do not believe so. If one might speculate at all, I think it would be quite enough to introduce decisions about the productive structure into the economic system almost in the guise of political premises, and, within production itself, it would suffice to democratize decisions to realize all the imperatives that already today within capitalism one would wish to put into practice, i.e., the humanization of the world of labor. I wonder, and this is an empirical question which we cannot resolve in the abstract, but only through experimental praxis, whether within the economic system we should not preserve most of the present complexity and limit the forms of the most discursive formation of political will so that they can break up the decisive and central structures of political power: aside from the organization of labor itself, this concerns few fundamental decisions that have to be continuously made and which pertain to the productive as well as to the redistributive structure. On the other hand, I am convinced that democratization is sought not in order to increase the system's efficiency but in order to change the *structures* of power and, secondly, in order to activate processes of defining goals which, on the premises of administrative decisions, either follow the wrong direction or do not function. It can be demonstrated that definite collective needs cannot be satisfied as long as decision-making is left to administration. And this is the real reason why the needs expressed through such autonomous movements are articulated in an unorganized form: because, up to now, administrative decision-making mechanisms do not function on that level. If we leave aside the definition of democracy as a value in itself, the present system produces sufficient demonstrative material in support of the thesis that democratization, greater participation and decentralization of will-forming processes are put forth, precisely because it is understood that *market plus administration* cannot satisfy a great series of collective needs.

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Q: We came out of the 1930s crisis with an increase in state power and administration over democratic organisms shaping political will—in both East and West, in obviously radically different forms through the New Deal, Nazism or fascism. Today we must see if, on the contrary, we could come out of the present crisis in the opposite direction, with the broadening of democracy. Eurocommunism is in fact a rethinking of the historical errors of the labor movement which have produced Stalinism; but it is also a search for a democratic road to socialism, for the forms of a transition understood as a process, not as a sudden and absolute rupture, one that at the same time would guarantee more participation and democratic power.

A: We must start from the fact that social systems as complex as highly developed capitalist societies would literally plunge into chaos if we were to try and change their fundamental structures from this day to the next. For this reason, you are right: today, I can imagine the revolution only as a long-term process that would make possible: a) an experimental transformation, i.e., one connected at every step to the successes and failures of central decision-making structures; b) at the same time—and this should even be presupposed—an "acclimatization" to democratic forms of existence; a gradual broadening of spaces to make decisions on democratic, participatory and discursive actions. In this way one could hope to escape the possibility that in critical situations there might be a successful recourse to the motion of "affections" from which fascism has always drawn fresh life. In fact, it is precisely during periods of transformation of complex social systems that there is a particularly great danger that some party might appeal to fear, to insecurity and to the latent disposition toward prejudice which hides in each one of us and that, in this way, some slogans might find consensus and support to make it possible for some sort of a fascist, or in any case, an authoritarian-administrative alternative to emerge. These are the two minimal conditions that should be met in a cautious and long-term process of transformation. This is a very difficult thing which requires also an incredibly intelligent party—or parties.

Q: I would also add: a mobile and not bureaucratized party.

A: A party that, whatever the consequences, exposes itself to this process of democratization: namely, at the risk of damaging its capacity for bureaucratic action. Of course, these are empirical processes with respect to which the task of theory would be at best to render visible the alternatives with which we are confronted.

Q: And also, to indicate possible solutions by analyzing the links between knowledge and power and to construct a physics and a microphysics of power. This is the only way I can explain the strong interest there is for Foucault's elaborations.

A: Foucault imagines that in the 18th century a bourgeois rationality was imposed on all fields of life and that it must be removed. What does not convince me is the non-dialectical negation. What we need to point out is that what Weber has defined as "rationalization" and what Foucault today has analyzed splendidly in completely different forms, i.e., in the fields of cultural and sexual relations, in criminality and insanity, is only a partial and incomplete rationalization and, therefore, dangerous. For, above all, it is characterized by the fact that it universalizes just one fundamental form, specifically that of an instrumental economic or administrative rationality. However, we must be careful not to throw out the baby with the bathwater and to avoid a new irrationalism; in Foucault's case, I see a certain danger...

Q: But he has also said important things: traditional Marxism has greatly underestimated the meaning of "power" in everyday life. It has assumed that State and Power coincided even though Engels, in his own way, had also dragged in the

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family...

A: I consider Foucault's work as an important contribution to the analysis of bourgeois forms of domination. Of course, this is also a set of themes that touches upon my own research interests. I too believe that relations of power are incorporated in the less apparent forms of communication and that, through the instrument of analysis of systematically distorted communications, one could do something analogous to what Foucault has done in his analysis of discourses. These are questions that have already been articulated by the reform and the student movements and reappear in neo-populist movements. The real problem is to understand what hides behind certain intuitions such as those of ecologists. In my opinion, at bottom there is an intuition that something is being attacked which was still more or less an area of free interaction. Moreover, in those spheres of traditional life not yet totally penetrated by capitalism, there probably still existed symmetrical and more expressive forms of interaction. The point is, therefore, not to limit the critique of power relations just to those institutions where such power is manifest, hence, not only to political or social power. Rather, this critique must be extended to those fields of life where power hides under the friendly face of cultural obviousness. These questions have already been formulated and analyzed by the "old Frankfurtians," particularly by the *Critique of Enlightenment* or by Marcuse's theses on the women's movement.

Q: In conclusion, it seems that you are suggesting a broadening of the critical horizon, an expansion of research fields which goes beyond a certain brand of Marxism but which does not amount either to abandoning Marx or, much less, to reducing him to the last, if not the true, philosopher of history, the enemy of open society, and the theoretician of totalitarianism.

A: Actually, this is sheer nonsense: the "new philosophers" are probably just an expression of a generational experience. Today they think as a-historically as they did in 1968 and they are rather correcting an error by committing it again. They are unable to see what it means to continue a theoretical tradition like Marx's and a practico-historical one like the labor movement with sensitivity for historical circumstances. That no socialism can exist without a radical appropriation of whatever has been produced by bourgeois emancipatory movements which is in substance the emancipatory potential of bourgeois rights is something that Western Marxism has always known. Western Marxists like Korsch, Gramsci and the "old Frankfurtians" have always stressed the identity of liberty and socialism.

Q: I want to try to draw a balance sheet concerning the question that has been pending throughout our conversation and which is probably the one we fear most today. I am thinking of terrorism. At bottom it contains all elements of this structural, spiritual and institutional crisis we talked about and in some aspects, it brings in terribly new features to the problem of intellectuals and, thus, of new generations.

A: We should try to analyze terrorism together with neo-populist currents as a phenomenon of reaction against the abolition of politics through administration. By this I mean a contraction of politics into administration on the one hand, and into pure acclamations on the other. It is interesting to ask for the directions along which there might be a reaction against this process of contraction. One consists in the attempt to reintroduce aesthetically expressive elements into politics, and another in introducing more decisively moral elements. There are authoritarian as well as anti-authoritarian versions of both. Fascism is the classical example of an authoritarian attempt to aestheticize politics. Anti-authoritarian forms of the aesthetization model have been provided by certain types of anarchism. The case of moralization is not very

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different. The authoritarian version of the attempt to moralize politics leads to despotic authoritarian forms of a politics. The anti-authoritarian attempt to *remoralize* politics points rather toward democratization, decentralization, and socialist positions. If we accept this schema we must ask ourselves where to locate terrorist activities. Here in Germany, it is very fashionable to claim that the terrorists are the sons of a moralism in the wrong direction. I do not believe this. Obviously, I am only speaking of Germany, where terrorist acts have the incredible character of a *show*; a character of actes gratuits and of self-gratification. In other words, these modes of behavior are not instrumentally functional to a goal. If this is so, and if we think about the extraordinary degree of militarization, discipline and submission, I would then be inclined to think that this "terroristic game" now playing in West Germany should be interpreted as a small-scale and underground counterpart of what in fascism had the dimensions of a mass movement. That is, it should be read as the authoritarian version of the attempt to reintroduce aesthetically expressive elements into politics. Terrorism is not something that drops from the sky. It is a structural phenomenon and the fact that it occurs in more serious forms in countries like Germany, Italy and Japan can be partly explained by the fact that in these countries poiltical cultures are less stable than elsewhere. These are historically less anchored and, therefore, they register more extreme reactions toward the same cultural phenomena confronted by other countries. However unpopular this statement might be, we have to say that terrorism is not an irrational phenomenon but that it has to be catalogued in the attempt to react to the same structural phenomenon: in its own and literally terrible way, it is an attempt to reaffirm the political moment against pure administration.

IS KADARISM AN ALTERNATIVE?*

by Mihaly Vajda

The answer to this question hinges on one's concept of an alternative. If one merely asks whether the Kadar regime represents a specific form of that social formation called "real socialism," then one must respond positively. The Kadar regime is clearly an alternative to the prevailing social system of Eastern Europe. When compared with one another, individual Eastern European socialist countries are identical only from the viewpoint of a typologizing sociology. If Sweden and Greece represent alternatives within the capitalist system, then Hungary under Kadar's rule is indeed an alternative within "real socialism". In order to understand people's lives in contemporary Eastern European nations, however, one must consider the diverse historical traditions of these countries.

The original question, however, implies something entirely different. What is expected is an answer to the far more concrete question: is Kadarism a model of "real socialism" which could be adopted by other Eastern European countries? The answer here is simply no, because there really is no such phenomenon as Kadarism. Contemporary Hungarian society constitutes only a variation of that social system known as "real socialism" and embodies specific characteristics which must be

*Translated by Betty Sun.

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explained in terms of traditions peculiar to Hungary. Nevertheless, the question remains meaningful. In order to justify our premature answer, we must address many questions which, if left unanswered, would condemn a critical social theory to impotence in the face of this social system.

I shall restrict myself to three central questions. The response to these will require a re-examination of the entire framework of Critical Theory. I refer specifically to Critical Theory and not Marxism, for it is my belief that efforts to understand societies of "real socialism" in terms of the Marxist conceptual framework are condemned to failure. Georg Lukács' 1919 statement that "the social precondition for the viability of historical materialism is an autonomous economy" has been contradicted by our knowledge and experience that no society can exist in which the economy is independent of all other social relations. But even if capitalism can be described in terms of historical materialism, "real socialism" presents a social formation whose economic operations we cannot comprehend nor analyze independently of the political and ideological power structure.

In order to understand "Kadarism" (as synonymous with contemporary Hungarian society), it is indispensable to comprehend the essential features of "real socialism". Attempts to analyze Eastern European societies are not novel. We will not consider seriously the apologetics of both anti-communists and ideologists of "real socialism" who univocally maintain that Eastern European social systems represent the realization of the Marxian conception of socialism. There are currently three main analyses of socialism tailored after the Soviet model. It has been interpreted as a transitional society between capitalism and true socialism or communism; b) the regression from an already realized socialism back to capitalism; or c) as state capitalism. All three hypotheses are untenable.

We cannot comprehend "real socialism" as a transitional stage because there is no evidence of any trend within "real" socialism pointing toward the realization of "true" socialism. The latter is a society in which the abolition of private property enables every individual to share the social wealth.

The theory of regression is likewise untenable. The most important characteristics of capitalist society, such as private ownership of the means of production and the power to determine conditions of production, are lacking here, as is the perhaps more significant aspect of profit-oriented production. Such capitalist conditions of production have never been reinstated in countries of "real socialism". The same can be said of the theory of state capitalism. In a state-capitalist society, i.e., in capitalism without capitalists, private ownership of the means of production may be abolished, but this alone does not mean the end of "capitalism" unless production is regulated by political decisions rather than by immanent economic laws. Such is the case in Eastern Europe.

Since these three hypotheses are not applicable, we are forced to recognize that "real socialism" represents a *new social formation.*[1] It is neither capitalism nor Marxian

1. I am well aware of the fact that neither a pure market nor planned economy is conceivable under the conditions of modern industrial societies. In both cases we are dealing with ideologies which in reality are forced to make concessions to the opposing economic principle in order not to destroy the respective conditions of production. On capitalism, see Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation* (Boston 1967); on socialism see György Bence, Janos Kis, Gyögy Markus, "Ist eine kritische Oekonomie überhaupt möglich?" unpublished manuscript. The question as to which of these ideologies is the decisive principle of social organization is by no means of secondary importance.

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socialism — even though it has some resemblance with the latter. Its most striking feature is the remaining oppression and exploitation. It was not easy for a critical social theory to realize this. Marxism's belief that capitalism was to be the *last* social system in history to condone oppression and exploitation has precluded the acceptance of "real socialism" as a *new* social phenomenon. Hitherto, all efforts to understand these societies have met with resistance; the remaining oppression and exploitation have suggested that capitalism has not yet been abolished. Only in recent years have there been attempts to analyze "real socialism" as a new exploitative social system from a Critical Theory perspective (i.e. one which remains critical of capitalism and its fundamental principles). The initial results of this attempt can be summarized as follows.[2]

1. Private ownership of the means of production and private control of production are abolished. Furthermore, the ruling elites of these societies do not collectively own the means of production. The most significant attributes of private property, i.e., its inheritability and transferability through sale, are lacking. The elite's ability to exercise authority over the means of production and hence over surplus arises from its claim to represent all of the people. The right to control the means of production and the surplus derives not from private ownership, but from membership in a particular political clique, i.e. the party and the state administration. Undoubtedly, the ruling elite benefits from its own power and exploits the working class. But power as such plays a far more significant role than the material privileges it engenders. In this crucial point, Critical Theory must uncover the residual liberal legacy within Marxism. For individual members of the elite, the duration of their power and privileges is guaranteed neither legally (as in capitalism) nor traditionally (as in pre-capitalist societies). For this reason, individuals must adapt completely to the caste spirit of the group to which they belong. Thus, the ruling elite corresponds structurally to the Weberian bureaucracy and contains many of its essential characteristics such as rigid hierarchy, the uncritical following of orders, and lack of initiative. Since there is no longer any private property and, at the same time, genuine communal ownership has not been realized, the dynamics of production are not internally safeguarded. The bureaucratic structure of domination does not encourage any extended forms of economic reproduction, but rather retards it. The existing dynamics of the system result from competition with the capitalist system which forces it to encourage consumerism. We will discuss the reasons for this shortly. The level of production remains lower here than in capitalist countries of a comparable degree of development.

2. The "free market economy" has been replaced by a centrally administered planned economy. As a result, however, production has become increasingly an end in itself, more so than it already was under cpaitalism. Whereas capitalist production can only realize its goal, i.e., profit, through the production and sale of commodities which satisfy certain consumer needs, the economic plan can be fulfilled even if goods and services produced according to plan do not satisfy any needs. Every society has to maintain a certain equilibrium between production and consumption, but the economic "plan" serves this end far worse as a regulating mechanism than the market.

2. Apart from the previously mentioned works, one of the most significant theoretical sources for my summary is György Konrad and Ivan Szelenyi, *Die Intelligenz auf dem Weg zur Klassenmacht* (Frankfurt, 1978), part of which has appeared in English in *Telos*, No. 38 (Winter 1978-79), pp. 48-62, under the title "The Intelligentsia and the Social Structure." Although I do not accept the book's fundamental thesis, I have learned a good deal from it.

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The "planability" of already existing individual needs and of new ones is impossible in principle. The planned economy can achieve a balance between production and consumption only by planning both. In the process, the plan does not recognize existing needs, but rather dictates consumption through authoritarian decisions.[3] The fact that planners do not organize production around existing needs but, rather, independently, endows their positions with authority. The planners do not serve the needs of "the people" — this being merely their ideological legitimation — but rather "the people" serve the purposes of the planners. The planned economy thus substitutes production for exchange-value with the fictitious production for use-value. However, because the satisfaction of already existing consumer needs has increasingly become a necessary precondition for the proper functioning of the system, certain elements of a market economy must be tolerated. In this manner, the system's viability is guaranteed by regulatory mechanisms which are incompatible with its very economic principle. This is one of the most significant sources of arbitrary power and corruption. A noteworthy peculiarity of Kadarism is its attempt to legalize such regulations.

3. Since production is not regulated by immanent economic laws but by a planning predicated on political decisions, economic, political and ideological power become interwoven. Civil society and the political state are no longer separate, while the egotism of the private sphere has not been abolished in the process. A situation thus arises which Marx characterized in the following manner: "In moments of extraordinary self-confidence, political life seeks to stifle its own preconditions, namely civil society and its elements, and to establish itself as the true, consistent species-life of human beings. It can do so only through violent contradiction with the conditions of its very existence." Marx could not imagine such a social state of affairs without permanent revolution and without the "reinstatement of religion, private property, and all elements of bourgeois society." How could Marx know that a revolution in his name would occur in a society in which the separation of civil society and the political state had not yet been realized to the fullest and in which the pluralism of economic, political and ideological power was lacking? The monolithic form of domination encompassing all spheres of life is all the more anachronistic the more developed is this separation process prior to the abolition of private property. The one-party system is one monolithic form of domination which could function equally well without a party. Party and state organs cannot be differentiated at any level of the hierarchy of power. This does not, however, mean that far-reaching conflicts of interest do not exist within the power structure. The most significant conflict arises from tensions between the proponents of "technocracy" and the ideological power apparatus. The "technocrats" primarily advocate a limited form of "rationality" (efficiency and "economic principles"), while ideological power relies more on the "rhetoric of power." Despite internal contradictions, the power elite maintains its unity. If, for example, supporters of "technocracy" wish to accomplish certain goals against the will of the ideological power apparatus, the former will never be independent of the latter. The "technocrats" never publicly articulate their particular goals and interests apart from those of the ideological faction. The authority wielded by the "technocrats" originates from the same source as that of political ideologists, i.e., from their repre-

3. It is therefore justifiable to call the ideal model of planned economy in "real socialism" a dictatorship of (over) needs, as Ferenc Feher and Agnes Heller have done in "Forms of Equality," *Telos*, No. 32 (Summer 1977), pp. 6-26.

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sentation of the people. Because they are neither private owners nor entrepreneurs, their domination over workers is legitimated by the power vested in the Party and in the "socialist State," and protected by the police. An independent "technocracy" based on economic power alone would be at the mercy of the working class. Because there are no power factions independent of each other, the structure of power is pyramidal. In idealized terms, society corresponds structurally to an all-encompassing pyramid with stratified, socially indistinguishable layers which represent different levels of political power, depending on the proximity to the peak. The monolithic structure of power suspends all public political discussion and prohibits the development and articulation of alternatives. The ruling elite cannot tolerate the public sphere in any form. For this reason, even the most progressive of reforms initiated from above never seeks to transgress the boundaries of economic reform nor encroach on the political structure. Because economic issues remain a mere appendage to politics and ideology, no real reform, even purely economic, is possible.

4. The unity of economic, political and ideological power gives rise to the system's totalitarian character. Even when the system functions relatively well and no direct political terror is apparent, it nevertheless remains totalitarian, for there is no sphere of daily life void of political significance. During the period of Stalinst terror, the phenomenon of totalitarianism as the all-pervasive "penetrating politicization," marked the beginnings of totalitarian rule. With the stabilization of the system, however, the character of totalitarianism has changed. Today, apolitical behavior — withdrawal into the private sphere and the forfeiting of all collective goals — has become the only viable option by which the individual can remain "independent" of repressive politics. To act *for* society necessarily involves the total integration into the power apparatus; this, in turn, entails the sacrifice of all individual values and personal initiative, and requires of the individual cooperation within a rigid bureaucratic framework according to predetermined methods dictated from above. The alternative to cooptation by the political machinery is opposition to the system. This option is open not only to so-called "dissidents," but also to others working within the system. However, punishment for political resistance, although not as severe as in the past, remains an effective deterrent. The totalitarian administration of society results in social apathy and in a degree of privatization exceeding by far the extent of depoliticization of individuals in capitalist society. All social organizations, however far removed from politics, are structured hierarchically and reconciled with goals officially determined by the power apparatus. Totalitarian authority has succeeded in instrumentalizing for its own political purposes a traditional organization whose ideology is hardly compatible with official ideology, i.e., the church. The freedom to exercise private initiative simply does not exist in any sphere of life. Because totalitarian power denies human beings all social goals, it is forced to direct its efforts toward the personal interests of society's members. Indeed, the power apparatus must encourage consumerism in spite of an official ideology which condemns consumerism and in spite of an economic system which does not favor the production of consumer goods. This explains the system's repeated attempts to increase production of consumer goods through economic reforms making concessions to certain market mechanisms. With these reforms, however, the system itself is endangered because these market mechanisms generate an increasing autonomy of the economic sphere and lead to the dissolution of the unified power. *The system's predominant contradiction lies in the fact that it can maintain its totalitarian power structure only by channelling all human activity into the private sphere; to this end, however, it is forced*

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to introduce a mechanism which threatens the system as much as the socially oriented initiatives.

5. The primary means to resolve this contradiction is the direct suppression of all criticism. However, because no system can sustain itself purely on the basis of physical terror, the power apparatus must find other means of opporession. One of these is official ideology, i.e. Marxism-Leninism. The issue here is not to convince people of the truth of ideology, for totally superficial and vacuous doctrines are incapable of that, and because the tenets of the official ideology so crassly contradict social reality. The power apparatus is likewise incapable of generating a persuasive social theory because "real socialism" has kept none of the promises made by its legitimating ideology. Official ideology does not even attempt to convince people; its function consists rather in depriving people of their speech. Because social problems are discussed in schools, universities and the media only in terms of deception and meaningless phrases (jargon), people lose all interest in the problems themselves. They can only partially express dissatisfaction and without recourse to generalizing the reasons for it. The question as to whether in "real socialism" power is monopolized by a minority which opposes and condemns the majority to impotence can be addressed only if we clarify our concept of exploitation. To our understanding, exploitation necessarily includes the private appropriation of socially produced surplus. The existence of any society requires that it produce surplus and devise regulations for its distribution. The unequal distribution of surplus is certainly a form of exploitation; however, exploitation is not exhausted simply in the injustice of distribution, but pertains also to the problems of production. Furthermore, exploitation does not obtain only in economic relations but also in political power relations. The interest in power, i.e., in the possibility of exercising authority over others, is certainly no less a source of exploitation than the frequently cited purely economic interests. If some persons can achieve autonomy only through the exercise of authority over others — and such is the case in all contemporary societies — then they will continue to have an interest in power. Although political power usually coincides with certain material advantages, the origins of exploitation in "real socialism" do not lie primarily in the economic sphere, but rather in the political one. The power elite in these societies exploit their positions insofar as it regulates social production and distribution and thus dictates over the aggregate social wealth and the majority of the population.

Can this fusion of political and economic power which systematically excludes and dominates the popular majority be legitimated? The bureaucratic structure, reinforced by the total isolation of individuals, gives the system a certain stability even if the oppressed stand in opposition to it. However, the system does not always rely solely on brute force or social apathy on the part of the oppressed. In many countries of "real socialism," the power apparatus consists of a legitimate government endorsed by the majority of its "subjects". Its primary source of legitmation, however, is not popular consent *per se*, but more importantly its stance on national traditions. Wherever political power does not conform with national tradition, it cannot develop any basis for legitimation. National traditions include the most varied of elements ranging from continuity in the form of government to forms of everyday life and even certain intellectual developments. The most crucial element of tradition is nationalism, which in many respects continues to play a vital role in Eastern Europe to this day.[4]

4. There is much discussion in contemporary Eastern Europe and particularly in Russia

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The traditional form of power has been best preserved in Russia, where "real socialism" is the product of a genuine revolution. The fundamental goal of revolutionary Marxism in Russia was the elimination of the schism between *civil society* and the bourgeois state. Bolshevism encountered a society in which this separation process had scarcely begun. In order to overcome the schism, it sufficed to suppress modern civil society at its very roots and, with it, the individuality connected with it. The nationalization of an entire society, the total assimilation of society into the "crystalline structure" of the state, as Rudolf Bahro aptly characterizes it, could only succeed if the state already exercised totalitarian power. The formidable Russian state concentrated primarily on an imperialist foreign policy, thus distinguishing it from Western European despotism which focused predominantly on internal affairs, and derived its legitimacy from nationalism. In Russia the strength of the state in the global context assumes primacy over all internal affairs and consequences, for only a powerful state can protect the nation from enemies. The weakness of the Russian state during the war against Japan in 1904-1905, so it is maintained, resulted in the 1905 revolution. Within the given framework, we cannot further discuss the legitimating function of nationalism in the Soviet Union today. Its immense importance is sufficiently indicated by simply mentioning key issues such as the "Chinese peril." In this controversy, political power enjoys the support of many intellectuals who are otherwise critical of the regime. Precisely because Russian nationalism constitutes the system's most crucial basis of legitimation, the "national questions" becomes at the same time the primary source of the greatest internal tension.

If nationalism establishes the legitimacy of political power, how has government achieved its legitimacy in Hungary after 1956? It cannot be denied that the Kadar regime, representing the power of the party-state or state-party, is a legitimate government. Its legitimacy, not unlike that of other regimes, derives from a nationalism. The Kadar regime, however, is founded on a nationalism peculiar to Hungary as a small nation, and has succeeded in finding a form of government consistent with Hungarian traditions. The previously described structure of "real socialism" has been realized in Hungary.

It is common knowledge that the projected taxation reform in Hungary was the most radical of all comparable reforms in Eastern Europe. In Hungary, the planned economy was to be structured by market mechanisms. The power apparatus realized that the satisfaction of certain consumer needs as well as the improvement of living standards would be of vital importance to its own survival. As long as the living standards continued to rise, the powerful had nothing to fear. A steady increase in consumer goods production could be achieved only by introducing certain regulatory mechanisms of the market; as a result, the power apparatus initiated and perpetuated this new form of economic management. However, economic reform without political reorganization encounters insurmountable contradictions. If, for example, the market and its immanent laws did truly regulate the economy, then such concomitant phenomena as increasing economic inequality and unemployment would necessarily follow. It is impossible to counter these developments without the freedom of organization and assembly and the workers' right to strike. Hence, in the final analysis, political democracy becomes indispensable. The power elite, seeking to bypass this

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concerning the role of nationalism. To my knowledge, the thesis on nationalism was first formulated by Andrew Arato in "Understanding Bureaucratic Centralism," *Telos*, No. 35 (Spring 1978), pp. 73-87.

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conclusion, saw itself forced to expel its most progressive members from leading positions because they might have drawn the political consequences of reform. Rather than allow these economic reforms to encroach upon the political realm, those in power deemed it less dangerous to withdraw or abruptly discontinue all reform. The tension arising from this fundamental contradiction characterizes Kadarism. It derives from its legitimacy a certain freedom of movement and greater stability; it manipulates this freedom in order to maintain its legitimacy.

Official ideology in Hungary is apparently incapable of fulfilling the prescribed functions. Hungary has not been quarantined from Western ideological influence nor from leftist ideologies. There were even periods during which critical opinions could be and were voiced. The fate of so-called dissidents is more bearable here than in other countries. Indeed, Kadarism is liberal. But it is precisely in this manner that official ideology serves its purpose. In a country steeped in European culture, the Soviet brand of *Diamat* could never succeed in "silencing" people. In Hungary, an ideology as meaningless and superficial as *Diamat* would not be tolerated; indeed, there are indications of a developing Marxist-Leninist ideology that addresses crucial issues and nevertheless remains critical. Such a form of Marxism-Leninism presents a real danger to the power elite. It is no coincidence that the majority of critical intellectuals in Hungary derive their positions from the Marxist tradition. In this respect, the regime establishes definite limits and punitive measures as deterrents.

Kadarism has at its disposal unique forms of domination which permit a greater degree of maneuverability on the part of the power elite. These forms of domination are possible only because they are consistent with historical traditions, of which the revolution of 1956 is but one. Hungary boasts a history of radical revolts, the defeat of which always resulted in a national compromise. In all such uprisings, the struggle for national sovereignty was implicit: the 1848 revolution was a war of independence from Austria; the Council Republic of 1919 came into being because the young bourgeois republic of Hungary did not dare defend the "mini-Entente" supported by Entente. Hungary is a small country and the Hungarians are a small nation of people. Independence is an impossible dream. We have had to accept our life even under the given circumstances. Our circumstances have been dictated to us and the system cannot be changed, least of all by those in power who have no interest in genuine change. Because this situation has been accepted by an entire people, the power elite has sought a real possibility of truly "humanizing" the system. In its failure to exercise this choice, Kadarism has proven that it does not provide any real alternative nor qualitatively new model within "real socialism."

Within this context, what is the role of the intellectual and criticism? It is certainly not the task of intellectuals to formulate political programs in the name of the "people" or the working class. Rather, critique has but one function, which remains the most crucial of all: to create a *public sphere* in Eastern Europe. Only when this public sphere has been established can a meaningful discussion of tendencies or programs of social development take place. In my opinion, the conditions for creating such a public sphere are very favorable in Hungary.

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EUROCOMMUNISM AND THE "RUSSIAN QUESTION"

by Bogdan Denitch

Apart from all the appropriate caveats that Eurocommunism is not a homogeneous movement and, as a phenomenon, represents increasing heterogeneity both between the communist parties and within these parties in Western Europe, some similarities do exist. One central question, which arises both on practical, narrowly political grounds and on basic theoretical grounds, lies in the relation of, on the one hand, the communist parties of Western Europe to the Soviet party and the state, and, on the other, of the relation of their vision of socialism and the Soviet model. This has historically been known as the "Russian Question" within the Marxist movements since the October Revolution.

Since the larger communist parties of Western Europe are organizations immersed in practical, day-to-day politics, clearly the first part of that question has been given much more emphasis in the parties and has produced much more visible results.

It is difficult, if not impossible, today to argue that whatever the individual virtues and vices of the West European parties usually designated as Eurocommunist, their organizational independence from the Soviet party and state is now a fact. It is, however, a fact that, like most "facts" in politics, has to be thought of in dynamic terms and as a process. It is a process that continues and which has set up its own dynamics that would be difficult to reverse but, nevertheless, a process that one can already see as having gone beyond the tipping point in achieving the practical independence of these parties.

On the second level, however, the emancipation of the parties organizationally has not been paralleled by an equal emancipation of the parties ideologically. Here, too, we are facing a process that is uneven from party to party and which, having fewer immediate practical consequences, absorbs far fewer energies of the party leaderships. But it is not merely that the party leaderships have not paid an equal degree of attention to the relationship of their model of socialism to the Soviet one, there are practical reasons for avoiding this question as well as difficulties in approaching it in a way that would not represent a traumatic break with the past ideological practice. The practical reasons are of course centered on the fact that the party leaderships, in asserting their independence from the Soviets, wanted to take along the bulk of the party membership and institutions, and had to deal with a considerable political lag, both in the party rank-and-file and in parts of the leaderships as well. It was relatively easy to argue the need for separate *roads* to socialism where each *party* would be sovereign and would adapt itself to the historical, strategic and tactical realities of its own nation-state. The practice, the day-to-day existence of mass communist parties made that both logical and necessary. And, as it became increasingly clear that the Western parties were "written off" by the Soviet leadership as serious contenders for political power in their own societies, the natural political egoism of the party organizations reinforced the drives to autonomy.

For the party leadership of the French, Italian, Finnish and Spanish parties, for example, organizational maintenance and adherence to the Soviet line were often in direct contradiction. On the other hand, a fundamental *ideological* break with the Soviet practice and the Soviet version of Marxism-Leninism was far more problematic. The norms of internal party democracy which prevailed in the Western

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parties were not that fundamentally different from the Soviet and East European practice. Democratic centralism in both cases had been interpreted until very recently as pure and simple centralism, and party dissidents were eliminated from the parties, if not with the same ruthlessness as was the case in the Soviet Union, where state power was in the hands of the party, at least with the same effectiveness. To be sure, in the West a problem always existed since the oppositions could not be physically eliminated and remained on the political scene, and thus could continue to affect sections of the membership of the parties. But the intent was clear: the centralist model meant to create a party of combat not fundamentally different from the East European and the Soviet parties. One could argue that, unlike Lenin's model, which referred to an organizational form appropriate to the needs of a tight band of professional revolutionaries operating under the conditions of czarist illegality, the centralism of *mass* communist parties, whether in or out of power, acted primarily as a mechanism with which to assure the complete dominance of the party apparatus over the membership and the ancillary organizations of the party. Therefore, a rejection of Leninism was not necessarily the form which a rejection of the Soviet practice would have to take.

There were other reasons why a theoretical break is difficult and is therefore postponed. One is that in many of those parties, until not too long ago, despite scientific criticisms of the Soviet system, a loose, broadly based sentimental link remained. The Soviet system was generally accepted as a variant of socialism, to be explained in terms of the Russian historical tradition and backwardness and, therefore, not necessarily appropriate to Western Europe, but a model of socialism nevertheless. That represented more or less what Togliatti and the Italian CP implicitly had in mind up to the 1960s. The Soviet model was perhaps appropriate for an underdeveloped society engaged in the task of primitive accumulation but certainly not relevant to the needs of an advanced industrial society with a developed tradition of civil society. However, as the Western European parties continued to emphasize their adherence to pluralism and to democratic norms, to the whole tradition of political democracy developed for more than a century in Western Europe, the question of the appropriateness of the East European models *even for Eastern Europe* was bound to arise. If these societies which, according to the Western communists, prohibit strikes, jail socialist and communist intellectuals, violate basic civil liberties, and act as a negation or "anti-model" of what the Western parties supposedly struggle for in their own societies, in what sense are they socialist societies at all? Or, to put it more precisely, what is the essential definition of socialist society, or are there numerous alternate models, some of which are appropriate to democratic Western political cultures and others, presumably, which are legitimate variants of something that one could call authoritarian socialism, more relevant for developing countries?

This is a discussion that the party leaderships were not at all eager to open up. One could alternately pose the question as a historical one: were these socialist societies that had at some point ceased to be socialist? Or was the practice of these societies *always* anti-socialist and the Western party leadership was simply ignorant of the relevant facts? Did it, for example, as the French CP leadership claims, take Khrushchev's secret speech for Thorez and the rest of them to become aware of the political realities in the USSR? That particular line of argument is somewhat difficult to sustain since those same party leaderships had engaged in prolonged systematic polemics against Marxist and socialist critics of the Soviet Union from the mid-1930s on. Or, finally, were the party leaderships in the Western parties themselves Stalinists who had politically evolved and changed their minds? If this is the case, what is

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normally incumbent in Marxist parties is systematic prolonged self-criticism — a practice that most party leaderships loathe.

The question of the nature of the Soviet Union ultimately has an even more drastic organizational consequence. If the Soviet Union is not a socialist society, and if the parties that defended Soviet and East European socialism had erred on so fundamental a question, then what is to justify today the continued separate existence of communist parties vis-à-vis the socialist and labor parties. If the model of socialism for which these parties are struggling is *sui generis* unrelated to the Soviet and East European practice and arises out of the specific historical conditions of their own society, what is then the difference between such a party and a socialist party? The question becomes more urgent as the West European communist parties shed organizational practices and phraseology which used to distinguish them. For example, abandoning the term "dictatorship of the proletariat," as in the case of the French and Spanish parties, or allowing it to fall into disuse, as in the case of other parties, opening up the party to internal discussion and permitting internal and external criticism, as is willy-nilly the case with most of them, creates parties that are increasingly hard to distinguish from the socialist parties or, at least, the left wings of those parties. What remains is a historical tradition, an ambivalent gift, and the notion that the communists are somehow more coherent and more consistent organizationally and political than the socialists. The basic question of the communist party's *raison d'être* in the first place is inevitable once one touches the so-called Russian question seriously.

I have argued elsewhere that the link with the Soviet Union for the West European parties was a far more complex matter than merely the subordination of the Western parties to the needs of the Soviet state and party. It did have that function, but it also served an organizationally indispensable function of permitting the maintenance of a distinct communist party in every country in the world irrespsective of the character and the strength of the socialist parties in those countries. It was the embodiment of the justification of the great historical split between communism and social democracy. Thus, the link with the Soviets not only linked those parties with successful revolutionary regimes in power — no mean asset for left parties in opposition — but the imprimatur from Moscow, the exclusive franchise as the local representative of a world revolutionary movement stabilized the individual party leaderships against potential internal challenges. At the very least, what happens as a consequence of a break with the Soviets and the insistence that there is no world center of the movement, the leaderships of the individual parties are thrown on their own resources for the maintenance of political power within the organization. Marchais, Carrillo and Berlinguer already cannot call on the Soviet party to sanction their leadership but must maintain that within their own capacities and bureaucratic resources. At the same time, potential opponents and critics operate under far more equal conditions than they did when they had to attack not only the local leadership of the national party but face the possible wrath of Moscow and the world movement.

Since the fatal step has already been taken, and the party leaderships no longer depend on the links with the Soviet or world movement for their internal legitimacy, the development of political and organizational autonomy will almost certainly spill over into the ideological sphere. It has, in fact, *implicitly* done so already. The vision of a socialist state and society put forward by the West European communists, unless one is to assume it to be purely hypocritical, is so fundamentally different from the practice and the ideology of the Soviet Union and its East European allies as to

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represent a criticism of that practice. But communist parties whose self-image is that of serious Marxist organizations, which cannot fail to grapple with theoretical questions cannot avoid a theoretical discussion of the practical consequences of their rejection of the Soviet model. Social democrats can. They are not expected to produce lengthy documents on theoretical questions or have an ideologically coherent world view. Communist and Marxist parties cannot. While it is possible for mass parties such as the French, Spanish and Italian to place an overwhelming emphasis on day-to-day work in their own societies and critiques of capitalism, it is impossible in the long run for them to fail to have some kind of a viewpoint, not necessarily a rigid line, about the nature of societies calling themselves socialist.

In order to grasp how far the West Communist parties have evolved, it is useful to recollect what the position of those parties had been. The relationship of the Western parties to the Soviets went through a number of stages, but for us here the last stage before the Khrushchev speech is most relevant. It is the period — the prolonged period — of a fully developed Stalinist system in the USSR during which most of the current Western party cadre reached political maturity. To be sure, given the very high turnover in the Western parties, most of the members have joined since the death of Stalin and since the first stirrings of polycentrism in the world movement. For them the intense emotional political and ideological link with the USSR either never existed or was much attenuated. The cadre, however, and the cadre is the central element in these parties, does include substantial elements from the Stalinist period, very few from the early heroic Bolshevik period. With very few exceptions, they joined a movement which was already Stalinized, roughly from the mid 1930s on, and where the needs of the Soviet state, in practice, repeatedly overrode the strategic needs of their parties.

However historically interesting the question is of the relationships of the Western parties to the Soviet party and state during the period where the left and right oppositions still existed within the Soviet party and in the Third International, that period of a revolutionary Bolshevism which was relatively heterogeneous in character, came to an end in the International by 1931-32. Within the next five or six years, the remnants of an independent communist leadership within the parties were eliminated — often physically — through purges, in the case of the German, Yugoslav and Polish parties, while exiled in the USSR.

For the next two decades, the Russian question, or even a hint of it, did not and could not exist within the CPs. The Soviet Union was quite simply the *ideal* model of socialism, not only a historically specific formation to be explained by the peculiarities of Russian history and Soviet isolation. The party cadres avoided polemics over this matter, debate with other Marxist currents was discouraged and remnants of communist oppositional currents in the labor movement were defined as agents of the ruling class, imperialism and fascism, to be physically assaulted and eliminated when possible. These intellectually impoverished decades drove even sympathetic analysts who maintained some vestige of independence out of the parties. (It is indicative, for example, that in the United States both Baran and Sweezy, who *did* consider the Soviet Union socialist, were treated with hostility and contempt by the party. The problem was that even posing the question was seen as illegitimate.)

While the story of the Soviet party purges, forced labor camps and gross violations of basic democratic rights was generally known, at least after World War II, that knowledge was filtered through the intense internal homogeneity of the party as simple slander or, at the very best, as justifiable measures against real enemies. The

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Khrushchev 1956 "secret" speech, therefore, represents a traumatic break. In each of the parties it was followed by intense debate. The Hungarian revolution of 1956, or rather its suppression by the Soviets, was a point at which a number of the party intellectuals and activists either publicly broke with the tradition of unconditional support for the Soviet Union or began to develop serious, often public, reservations. The decade between the Hungarian Revolution and the Prague Spring was a period during which the communist parties were ideologically on the defensive and where the Russian question began to emerge within the parties. A fair summary would be that the party consensus was that the Soviet Union was still a socialist state, one now, however, capable of gross errors that were explained either by the development of a cult of personality around Stalin, or by the isolation and backwardness and the tasks of primitive accumulation that that backwardness dictated.

The modal line of the West European CPs in that period was some version of polycentrism, the notion that many valid and specific paths to socialism existed, with the Soviet and East European path seen as historically specific. The Prague Spring temporarily offered an apparent solution. If Czechoslovakia could produce a socialism with a human face, a state which was socialist in its economic character, in which the communist party retained dominance, but within a system which was democratic and pluralist; if, further, such a development would be tolerated within the Eastern bloc, then one could conceive of the violations of democracy and socialist norms that had taken place in the previous decades as an early, cruder stage of a system that had an internal potential for self-regeneration and one that would evolve toward a society acceptable to Western Marxists.

This explains the enormous popularity of the Dubcek experiment in the Western parties and the consequent sharp reaction to the Warsaw Pact invasion. The Western parties, almost without exception, broke with the Soviets on that question, and maintained their support for the Dubcek wing. But breaking on this matter opened a Pandora's box. What kind of a socialism is it that leads to an invasion of a socialist country? What kind of socialism is it, indeed, that has to be imposed by force on an advanced working class which had already abolished capitalism? What kind of socialism is it that has to physically eliminate loyal communists who have obvious mass support? It is not a question here anymore of cults of personality, or "mistakes," but rather the question was urgently posed in the Italian party, in the British party and in the then-exiled Spanish party: *What were the structural characteristics of a society that created such a result?* This meant, willy-nilly, raising the question of the social and class character of the Soviet state.

The party leaderships developed a holding action following the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia. The polycentrist line was taken to its maximum conclusion which stressed the peculiarities of the Soviet and East European states as being so exceptional and so basically irrelevant to the Western experience as to require the development of their own distinct roads to socialism. The Soviet Union remained some kind of a socialist state, progressive vis-à-vis American imperialism, and playing a generally acceptable role in the Third World with its support of liberation movements. But a state whose interests could very well conflict with the interests of other socialist states, and a state and society which were in no sense a model for what was appropriate for the advanced industrial West. The ideological separation was probably slowed down by the Vietnamese war and the relative isolation of the communist parties politically within their own countries. However, it already permitted fresh strategies in individual countries which had no reference to an international line. The electoral

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alliance of the French communists and socialists was forged during that period. The main contours of what we now know as Eurocommunism began to develop, a line that stressed the national authenticity of each individual communist party and which, with varying degrees of intensity and clarity, committed itself to parliamentary democracy and a pluralist version of a socialist society. This line criticized specific violations of human rights and democratic norms in the Soviet bloc while still considering on a number of international questions the Soviet Union and its allies as basically "progressive," pursuing policies that were committed to peace, the anti-colonial revolution, and which, above all, acted as a limit on the strength of American imperialism.

In practice, what this view amounted to was the notion that between the two collosi the Soviets were to be seen as the lesser evil. As a consequence, one could discuss the specific problems of those societies without, as yet, crossing the Rubicon and making a complete organic break. After all, the Soviets themselves no longer even attempted to extract the kind of loyalty that was previously taken for granted, and were reluctantly willing to concede the validity of alternate roads to socialism, although stressing in all of their polemics the universal applicability of their model, which they referred to increasingly more often as *real* or *concrete* socialism. They simply granted the possibility that *on the road to such a socialism,* different strategies would be appropriate in different countries, while still rejecting the notion of pluralism and what they defined as bourgeois democracy. The difficulty the parties in the West faced, however, was that once they committed themselves to a pluralist vision of a socialist society, it became increasingly difficult, if not impossible, to maintain *internal* monolithicism. Here, too, a compromise was found. On theoretical matters, first reluctantly, later systematically, debate was permitted in and around the parties. The party discipline became increasingly narrowly defined over matters of the party's own political and social strategies.

This was an uneasy compromise at best, and it is possible to follow much of this debate in some detail. The most articulate were perhaps the British communists who opened up an intense internal debate and published a journal called *Socialist Europe: Communist Journal of Soviet and East European Studies,* which explicitly focuses on the nature of the Soviet Union and East European societies. In other parties, the debate is less organized but both Italian and French communists have published, with and without the party's imprimatur, historical works on the Stalin period (e.g., Ellenstein's history) which are radically revisionist. The most formal statement from a leadership is, of course, Santiago Carrillo's much translated *Communism and the State.* All of these books and the British communist journal specifically focus on the nature of the Soviet state — how it got there and its probable path of evolution.

Carrillo, for example, defines the state in the Soviet Union as one which is in an intermediate phase between a capitalist and a "genuine" socialist state, in the same way as the absolute monarchies were an intermediate phase between feudalism and contemporary parliamentary democracy. While the analogy is vague, it points to the historically progressive character of the Soviet Union but *denies* it the characteristic of a socialist state. It thus, at the very best, treats the Soviet society as a very primitive, unfinished stage of development toward what a socialist society should be.

Monty Johnson, a British communist theorist, in his critique of Carrillo, comes up with a different analogy equally unlikely to provoke anything but horror among Soviet ideologues. His position is that the Soviet Union is a *workers' state* but one *in which the workers do not rule,* where the political bureaucracy plays a role analogous to that of a

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power elite in a capitalist society. Following a Polish sociologist, Weselowski, in a capitalist society there is a ruling class but it does not itself govern directly. It is thus possible for the power elite, a much smaller group which makes the state's concrete decisions, to acquire considerable autonomy. Johnson's point is thus that there is a *ruling bureaucratic stratum* which rules in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe but because of the nationalized and collective property relations it still rules in the ultimate interests of the working class. This "interest" is often imperfectly understood, and gross violations of specific immediate working class rights can and do take place. The ruling stratum's definnition of working class interests may be wrong, exceedingly abstract or long-range, and of course is subject to power struggles within the stratum. This assumes that the concrete power is held by a leadership which is far removed from the direct influence of the working class.

Other British communists have pursued the analogy further, and have argued that it is possible for a capitalist society to exist with a ruling class whose interests are most imperfectly represented by a state which is authoritarian or even fascist. This point of view is not too far from what had been the classic Trotskyist view of the Soviet state and society: that it is *a workers' state* but one *profoundly degenerated*, where *a dictatorship is exercised by a ruling bureaucratic stratum against the working class while still basing itself on collectivized property relations.*

The real point of this seemingly exceedingly abstract debate, I would argue, is that a fatal step away from the notion that the Soviet society is a socialist one has been taken. This permits a Western party to take the viewpoint that while defending the collectivized property relations, it may well *support collective struggles of the working class against the ruling bureaucratic stratum*. With the Polish strikes in Gdansk of 1975, this is what has happened.

By this point, for some Eurocommunist theorists, the "progressive" or socialist character of the Soviet state is so Platonically attenuated that it becomes politically almost irrelevant. Let us recapitulate. Johnson and the other British communists, joined in this by Carrillo, some of the Italian and French theorists, seem to be saying: (1) the Soviet society is vestigially socialist because of its collective property relations. However (2), this socialist society whose *property relations* represent the "interests" of the working class, is ruled by a bureaucratic leadership stratum which has little or no relationship to the working class itself, and a great deal of subjective autonomy in decision-making. (3) The consequence of this is that the working class does not receive concrete benefits from this society which it abstractly rules but, on the contrary, in terms of living standards, working conditions and distribution of power, a persistent and growing gap between it and the leadership stratum is to be found. And (4), progressive *socialist* struggles from below are possible which would be directed against the bureaucratic stratum (class, caste or whatever). These struggles in turn deserve the political support of Western communists. Within this framework, it is also possible to attack violations of freedom of speech, workers' rights and attacks on individual dissidents as a general policy of defending democratic rights while holding that in foreign policy, at least compared to the United States, the Soviet Union for its own purposes and reasons may have a progressive policy.

One should also add that following the debates on the Czech events, the Western communists have often also increasingly stated that they are opposed to the forcible extension of Soviet power, and regard it as the task of communists to defend the national independence of their own societies. This has permitted ambivalent developments such as the French communist support for the French nuclear deterrent, and

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the Italian communists' statements that it is easier to conceive of a development of a mature socialism within NATO than out of it. To put it in Marxist terminology, this is arguing that an extension of the power of the bureaucratic leadership stratum of the Soviet Union over parts or the whole of Western Europe is *not* a progressive step but, on the contrary, something to be resisted. A replacement of the present limited welfare state in Western Europe by the social system which exists in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union would not be an advance to socialism. What is left for the West European communists, therefore, is the notion that the Soviet model *might have been* appropriate at a certan historical stage for societies as backward as the USSR and the East European states, but that in terms of the world socialist perspectives, the extension of Soviet socialism to the advanced West European societies would be a reactionary step backward.

By evolving as far as they have, the Western communists now face an increasingly open and urgent debate on the nature of the Soviet society itself. That is, what now comes into question is: are not those states and bureaucracies backward or retrogressive, *given the possibilities of those societies?* If the basic task which this "state" or bureaucratic socialism was to carry out was primitive accumulation and modernization, is it not now an obstacle within societies which can no longer be seen as underdeveloped. Whatever else one can say about East Germany, Hungary, Poland and the Soviet Union itself, these are now advanced societies, relatively highly industrialized, with a massive proletariat which is excluded from any vestiges of state or social power.

Today the position of many of the Eurocommunist theorists begins to approach the position of substantial elements within the socialist parties. After all, the socialist parties, while clear in their opposition to Soviet state socialism, have not developed a theoretical model of what those societies are. They, not having the historical link which had bound the communists to the USSR, did not have to develop a theoretical point of view on this matter. As the Western CPs became more enmeshed in coalitions with socialists and more committed to making structural transformations in their own societies, they may well for a period have a position analogous to that of the socialist parties — generalized opposition to the Soviet model without an alternate clear analysis of what that model represents.

What argues against such a heuristic compromise is the fact that the communist parties, unlike the socialist parties, pay a great deal of formal attention to ideology and to Marxist categories and analysis. This makes it very difficult for such a party, unless it moves away from Marxism itself, to develop an *agnostic* view about societies which call themselves socialist. The best that they can hope for is a sufficiently generalized critique of the Soviet society, which would permit a number of alternate and competing theoretical views to legitimately exist within the party. But one point of view is clearly excluded. It is the classic, traditional view that the Soviet Union and the states modelled on it are socialist societies representing a desirable model for other parties to emulate. That point of view leads to factions inside the party which would challenge the very basis of Eurocommunism, their independent road to socialist development. While various orthodox Marxist tendencies and currents exist within the European communist parties, they tend to focus their critique on what they see as reformist and revisionist tendencies within the parties vis-à-vis their own societies, rather than on the parties' posture toward the Soviet state. Currents which are Moscow loyalists have challenged the party leaderships in Spain, Britain and Sweden, and in all three cases have been expelled. The looser structure of the Italian party and the great organizational loyalty generated by the French party have made such challenges

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less likely.

What would an examination of the nature of socialist societies entail in a party which defines itself as Marxist? Clearly it is not enough to talk about the violations of political and human rights or the exploitation of workers or the repression of trade unions. The central question that arises is that of the *class* character of those societies, and from that fundamental question, various consequences follow.

We have a limited historical precedent in the evolution of the thinking of the previous Marxist currents which had broken off from the Soviet leadership. Staying within the communist orbit, there are of course the classic left and right oppositions, which arose out of the Communist Party of the USSR, the Trotskyists and the Bukharinists, the Yugoslav official and unofficial Marxists, and the Chinese and their supporters. All have grappled with the issue, and have come out with a number of possibilities. The reality which they describe was more or less the same — the theoretical conclusions were not, because from those would follow an *affirmative* view of what a socialist society should be.

When one examines the various views which anti-Soviet or independent Marxists developed, and that is a part of the theoretical inheritance available to the Eurocommunist theorists who do not have to begin their work *de novo*, we find a limited number of alternatives. My own guess is that the right opposition or the Bukharinites will enjoy a considerable vogue in the Eurocommunist parties. Trotsky's own inheritance is obscured by the emotional and organizational disputes which the presence of his followers create on the political scene.

The first systematic critique within the communist movement, completely erroneous in my opinion, came from the left opposition led by Trotsky in 1924-1929, which considered the Soviet Union to be in danger of a *Thermidorian restoration,* that is, a restoration of some aspects of capitalism around a figure of Stalin who was visualized as analogous in his role to the Bolshevik revolution to the role which Napoleon played for the French revolution. While the dispute was historically intriguing and seemed to make sense given a "right" turn of the party line, it centered on NEP domestically and a moderate broad international line. It became abstract and moot after the second, or Stalinist, revolution or, if one wants, counterrevolution, of the early 1930s. Where whatever else was unclear, it was clear that *capitalism* was not being restored and that instead a major, historically unprecedented drive for primitive accumulation was taking place, accompanied by great brutality, but it eliminated the "NEPmen" and independent peasants as well as the right opposition in the Soviet party and the International. Whatever the other ugly aspects of Russia of the great purges accomplished, they made unlikely any serious theoretical formulation about the restoration of capitalism or capitalist relations in the Soviet Union, at least in traditional Marxist terms.

The second critique, still basically adhered to by Trotskyists and some of the dissident communists, is that the Soviet Union is a workers' state but a degenerated one, where the bureaucracy has usurped the power of the workers and created a political dictatorship over a society in which capitalism was abolished and which is economically inherently more progressive than capitalism. The simplistic analogy used here was that of a trade union, controlled by bureaucrats or gangsters, where presumably the task of principled Marxists is to struggle to remove those usurpers from control of an otherwise progressive workers' institution. To complicate matters, this same gangsterous bureaucracy was believed to be obliged to defend socialist property forms on which it based its own power; above all, against any *external* threat. To

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pursue the trade union analogy: a corrupt trade union leadership may well be forced to fight militantly to defend the union's jurisdiction and contractual benefits for its own reasons while at the same time suppressing all internal opposition with great brutality. The presumed advantage of this "degenerated" workers' state theory was that it permitted those who held that view to simultaneously criticize all violations of workers' rights and democracy in the Soviet Union and do so in harsh and uncompromising terms, while defending the Soviet Union from all external attacks by the capitalist states. It still retained a kernel of progressive social and economic base, which made it necessary for it to play, albeit reluctantly, a progressive role. In Marxist jargon, what followed from that view was that what was needed in the Soviet Union, and presumably the states modelled after it, was a *political* rather than a *social* revolution.

There were a number of difficulties with this theoretical approach, not the least of which was the difficulty of explaining the social systems of Eastern Europe. If the Soviet Union presumably was a workers' state, albeit degenerate, because it was the result of a *successful proletarian revolution* which degenerated for various historical reasons: what kind of societies were the East European dependencies of the Soviet Union, where the Stalinist system was imposed full-blown without anything which would have resembled an indigenous proletarian revolution?

Variants of the degenerated workers' state theory are an interesting transition point in making the break from Soviet practice. This view permitted its adherents to struggle against Soviet strategies and moves outside of the Soviet Union without accepting the Western political system as a lesser evil, and thus made it possible to maintain a revolutionary ideology while criticizing Soviet practice. The problem that the Euro-communists face, however, is that the degree of sympathy for the Soviet system which existed when it was an embattled, isolated and relatively weak nation-state within the left in general, no longer exists. Therefore, a more fundamental break theoretically is required and is already present at least implicitly in the debates within the Western communist parties.

The third critique which developed out of the Marxist tradition is one which assumes that the Soviet Union is not a socialist state at all. If they concede the term, it is a "socialism" of a type fundamentally different from either the visions of Marx and-or Lenin, or those which would be appropriate for an advanced industrial society. The basic assumption here is that *the relations of production*, rather than the *ownership of the means of production*, are critical in determining the class character of the Soviet state, and that the *state ownership* of the property is of limited relevance if that *state* is controlled by the narrow political and economic elite which is most often described as the Soviet bureaucracy. There are two variants of this view.

Without going into the theoretical underpinning, one can be summarized as the view that the Soviet Union is a *new form of class society*, bureaucratic collectivism, where the bureaucracy acts as a ruling class and seeks to export its model, which is in mortal conflict with capitalism everywhere. This new class seeks to create parties which mobilize the working class for the purpose of establishing other bureaucratic collectivist societies. The emphasis here is on the centralized nature of Soviet planning and control, on the supremacy of the political over the social and economic, and on the *dynamic* nature of this new social order.

The second view is that the Soviet Union is best described as something called *state capitalism*, or Etatism, or statism, or perhaps State Socialism, which differs from the first only slightly in practice, though more basically in theory. The assumption is that

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the state and those who control it, perhaps an appropriate term would be the politocracy, exploit the society and the working class through their monopoly of state power and through the destruction of all independent workers' institutions — trade unions, Soviets, work councils, etc. This society, then, is subject to class contradictions analogous to those under capitalism and is vulnerable to massive workers' discontent which would have as its ultimate aim a social as well as a political revolution. The advantage of this model is that it also postulates the possibility of more limited struggles, again analogous to those under capitalism, for workers' rights and independent trade unions, which would be seen in this context as clearly progressive from a Marxist and socialist point of view.

Variants of this third view are held both by dissident communist intellectuals of the type represented by the *Praxis* circle in Yugoslavia and its analogues elsewhere and, for that matter, by the official Yugoslav establishment which somewhat hesitatingly but repeatedly has defined the Soviet Union and the East European states as state socialist, etatist, or even sometimes in Kardel's writings, as state capitalist. The fact that the Yugoslavs find themselves most attracted to this point of view makes it a view which is more likely to get a hearing in the broad ranks of the party leaderships of the West European parties. The contrasts between etatist socialism and socialism, then, focuses on the presence or absence of independent workers' institutions, workers' control or self-management of the economy and political democracy itself. It is therefore the view which flows naturally from the critiques which the Eurocommunist theorists engage in at this time. It is explicitly stated by a number of Spanish theorists, including Claudin, and it is a view which is already treated as legitimate within a number of the other parties. The reason it has not become the dominant view lies in the organizational consequences of what would then be a total break. Therefore, for the time being, the party leaderships in Western Europe prefer ambiguity and prefer to limit themselves to specific criticisms of aspects of the Soviet and East European reality, underlined by the repeated insistence that their own model would be fundamentally different.

The changing social and political realities of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union make possible the development of critiques of those systems based on classical concepts of Marxism. The main single change, of course, is the development of a massive, new, working class within the industrialized societies of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. This is a working class whose organic links with the village and the peasantry have been attenuated or broken, which has now produced a second generation of proletarians who are spatially segregated, for whom the rapid social mobility characteristic of the early years of those systems is an abstraction. For this class, the gap between the prosperous new middle strata and the blue-collar manuals is increasingly visible and intolerable. It is, above all, a class which has repeatedly been told that its demands and needs are legitimate.

What we have now developing in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union is a working class which, no matter how cynical about the claims of the ruling parties, exists in societies which base their own claims for legitimacy on socialist and Marxist ideology. No matter how warped a form of these ideologies is pressed, the fundamental message is clear: a socialist society is one characterized by the political, economic and social hegemony of the proletariat. One does not need agitational pamphlets to draw the contrast between that fundamental normative claim of the apologists of those societies and the social reality. Therefore, working class unrest, wildcat strikes and dissent is systematically endemic and, for the West European communist parties, that dissent

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represents a far more attractive face than many of the dissidents from the intelligentsia, the oppressed national groups, and the middle class. It is natural for the Italian, French and Spanish communists, as well as for the smaller parties, to find themselves supporting the strikers' committees in Poland. Where the intellectual and ethnic dissenters are concerned, the matter is more complicated. But even in this case, there are present socialist and Marxist dissenters (e.g., Roy Medvedev) where the parties in the West can find themselves going beyond mere support of the rights of these dissenters to exist but can express their solidarity with the political program of the dissidents. Roy Medvedev is regularly published in the Italian communist press, as are a number of other socialist dissidents.

The presence of Marxist and socialist dissidents in Eastern Europe and exile accelerates the process of dealing with the Russian question in the Western parties and, since no end is in sight for the dissidents, the interaction of the Eurocommunists with radical dissidents and with social protest in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe will be a permanent backdrop to their already attenuated and troubled relations with the Soviet bloc.

MARXISM AND SOCIALISM*

by Norberto Bobbio

A criticism of the Italian Socialist Party's program, coming even from within the party, is that it is hardly Marxist. The resulting disucssion has been the umpteenth opportunity to re-examine Marxism's vitality, continuity, relevance, durability, validity, truth, and so on. I am suspicious of the opportunistic character or fruitfulness of such a debate. The following observations are made neither by one who considers himself a Marxist, nor by a "Marxologue," — if that term refers to one who has made Marx's work the primary subject of study.[1] I say this only to explain that my perspective is not the common and frankly tiresome one of the debate between Marxists and non-Marxists. Nor is my perspective that of the converts who, having once been Marxists but are no longer, are just as obstinate in their hatred of Marx now as they were obstinate in their support of Marx earlier.[2]

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1. I have read and reread Marx, in particular the historical and philosophical works. But I have read them as classics, in the same manner that I have read Plato and Aristotle, Hobbes and Rousseau, Kant and Hegel, and more contemporary writers such as Pareto and Weber. I am not a Marxist, just as I am not a Platonist or an Aristotelian, a Kantian or a Hegelian. I have been fascinated by the power of Marx's works, especially when I translated and introduced into Italian the *Philosophical and Economic Manuscripts of 1844*. But I should also mention that during these same years I presented the first integrated translation of Hobbes' *DeCive*, an author whose decisive importance on the history of political thought, or better, of reflections on the modern state's emergence, was not then recognized as it is universally recognized now. I must add that the awe I held for Marx due to the power of his critique, was abated and later overturned by an aversion to the intolerance, the bitingly fierce and contemptuous manner with which the author of *The German Ideology* and *The Holy Family*, and his faithful friend, Engels, were so adept in criticizing people. In any case, I never doubted that Marx was a great thinker whose thought must influence anyone approaching the matter objectively.

2. These are the people who, having bowed to an idol, feel the need to knock it down when getting back upon their feet. Who, in waving the flag bearing the motto, "All in Marx, nothing outside of Marx, nothing against Marx," would not feel the need to join the rebels' chorus?

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Marx's genius is primarily in his critique; more in the critique than in his system. But the followers who have made an "ism" of his thought have necessarily preferred his system to his critique — a system that did not exist; a system that, having never existed, has been reconstructed at every turn in a different manner. Right from the beginning Marx spelled out his goal of dedicating his work to the critique of economics, politics, ethics, religion, etc. He started by ridding himself of others' critiques, and thus devoted himself to the critique of critique, or indeed, to the critique of critical critique. He turned the major part of his efforts to the critique of political economy, postponing the rest to a time that was not to come, and wrote a monumental work dedicated to the critique of capitalist society.

But the issue here is not to ascertain Marx's merits and shortcomings, but to present the consequences of transforming Marx's work into a complete doctrine from which valid answers could be obtained for every problem.[3] This has disastrous consequences for the social sciences. There is nothing that dissuades from research more than the illusion of being able to extract all the answers from one text or from its interpretation. It distresses me to return to the argument, but it is literally inexhaustible. I return to it because the typical distortions produced by every doctrine supporting itself through the principle of authority and favoring its use have not been placed in proper perspective: when reality contrasts with the doctrine, rather than recognize that the doctrine has badly interpreted reality, the doctrinaire tends to demonstrate that the doctrine has been badly interpreted, and ends by seeking the solution to the contrast between doctrine and reality, not in a new interpretation of reality, but in a new interpretation of the doctrine. These kinds of arguments waste energy and time. Yet, it is from arguments of this nature that various brands of Marxism have emerged. Instead of proceeding, as would any scientist who attempts to substitute adequate for inadequate theory, the doctrinaire follows the opposite path, that of substituting a 'correct' for a necessarily incorrect interpretation of the doctrine. Therefore, it comes to pass that a doctrine's fate is characterized not by one theory succeeding another, but by differing interpretations of the text clashing with one another. Though sometimes interesting, the result is often useless.[4]

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3. For example, some Italian lawyers whose professional seriousness and earnestness I can vouch for have started a periodical for the public good with the intention of proclaiming the importance and relevance of Marx for the development of criminals' rights, i.e., to a discipline that Marx never handled. I clarified this point in an open letter to the above-mentioned journal: *La Questione Criminale*, III:3 (1977), pp. 425-428.

4. Consider, for example, the endless discussion concerning the dictatorship of the proletariat, recently taken up in France. In the course of the debate of the 22nd Congress of the French Communist Party, it was decided that the notion be abandoned as soon as possible from the party's statutes. Everyone understands that the problem emerged from the acknowledgement of the occurrences in the Soviet Union, in which the proclaimed and long-awaited dictatorship of the proletariat became the dictatorship of a party (or literally of the ruling class of the party). Now, anyone who is fundamentally interested in understanding why this happened and how one can make sure this will not happen in other countries where the transition from the capitalist state has not yet been realized would do well to study various phases of the revolution, of the internal and external battles that led the Bolsheviks to power, etc. But, lo and behold, the discussion begins immediately from the interpretation of texts: what did Marx mean, or what did Lenin mean by "dictatorship of the proletariat?" I have no difficulty in admitting that Marx and Lenin meant by dictatorship of the proletariat something very different from the dictatorship of Stalin or Brezhnev. But this is a small consolation. I have not seized on one case to prove a point. From those who defend the dictatorship of the proletariat one would expect that they maintain that the Soviet state is not a dictatorship, or that it was a provisional dictatorship destined to end with the ending of the special transitional period of the state. But no, as I read in a recent book,

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The real question has to do with judging the socialist project in terms of its degree of "Marxisticity". First of all, it would be necessary to agree on what Marxism means, i.e. whether there are and what are the basic elements according to which one could say a program is Marxist and whether these elements are or are not acceptable today. This means that before a project can be correctly and usefully judged Marxist, it is necessary that the criterion for judgment be consistent and that it be worthwhile to adopt in the case in question.[5]

Because there are two problems, it is appropriate that they be treated separately. I will start with the first, i.e. with the question of the criterion's existence. The problem concerns what Marxism means today. The answer to this question has become more and more difficult, and, in any case, very controversial, at least for two reasons: (a) because there are many Marxisms; and (b) because a crisis in Marxism has been acknowledged even within Leftist circles. If there are many Marxisms, it is necessary to specify which Marxism one means before using Marxism as the criterion for judgment. If there is a crisis in Marxism, it is necessary to fact up to it, and with luck, dismiss it — but only after having demonstrated its inconsistency. What is easily dismissible is the claim that nothing is wrong today, that we could call Marxism into question without re-defining it, without asserting which Marxism we are speaking of, and accuse others of distorting Marxism without paying attention to the increasingly visible distortions that Marxism has undergone during a hundred years of history.

Today nobody doubts that there are many Marxisms — almost as many Marxisms as there are Marxists.[6] The Marxism of churches has given way to the Marxisms of sects and schools, which in turn clash with the Marxism of personality figures (like Ernst Bloch), that cannot be reduced to a particular church or sect or school. Something

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the main argument is the typical doctrinaire argument: that of citing all the necessary texts and even some extra ones, and to go looking for what Lenin meant when he spoke of the dictatorship of the proletariat, showing that he meant it differently from those who wish that the issue be abandoned. After which, the reader still has the right to say: fine, but I do not care so much about what Lenin said as I do about what has really occurred in the country in which Lenin was the great protagonist during the revolution. Who guarantees me that the same will not occur in a country whose party declares that the transitional state will be the dictatorship of the proletariat? A nice quote from Lenin? The book I am referring to is Etienne Balabar, *Sulla Dittatura del Proletariat* (Milan, 1978).

5. Let us assume that a literary critic believes that every work of literary criticism must be judged by its degree of correspondence to Croce's aesthetic theory. He first will have to explain what Croce's aesthetic theory is, distinguishing it from other theories and other interpretations of the same theory, and second, he will have to demonstrate that Croce's aesthetic theory, or the interpretation that he gives to it, is the only valid criterion for judging the quality or shortcomings of a literary critique. The only one who can be exempted from the second proof is the person who operates within a universe in which the adoption of that criterion versus another is considered indisputable, and thus its application obligatory. It is the case of a judge in a judicial system where the judge's function is to declare the law and not to create it. In this case, the judge's duty is simply that of finding the criterion (the common legislative predisposition) according to which a certain conduct has to be judged, and not that of also demonstrating the criterion's validity, because the validity of the criterion is presumed. I ask myself and those who introduce the Marxist criterion by which to judge the enterprise whether the judgment in this case is comparable to the judge's or instead to the Crocean literary critic's? The answer is clear: the judgment we are discussion is similar to the second case and not the first. To compare it to the former would be necessarily to admit that there is no socialism outside Marxism (which is historically false) or that Marxism, even if it is not the only possible socialist theory, is binding to the adherents of a particular socialist party. Such a thing could, in fact, be true since one cannot overlook that the obligation to be Marxist can be a part of a party's discipline aligning itself with socialism; but, in fact, it is not true — at least, until proof to the contrary.

6. Cf. my "Is There a Marxist Theory of the State?" in *Telos*, No. 35 (Spring 1978), pp. 5-16.

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more, however, should be said concerning not so much that we have many Marxisms but that the many doctrines, sects or schools, while still proclaiming allegiance to Marxism, maintain theses so contradictory among themselves as to be irreconcilable. I am not saying that these contradictions are not explicable, but only that they focus one's attention on the complexity of Marx's works which extend over a period of forty years and over many thousands of pages, and which, as every interpreter knows, inevitably point, depending on the time and circumstances, to different solutions to the question "What do we do?" The argument based on authority is the most serviceable of arguments, as is well known by theologians and lawyers who always find the text adapted to the thesis already discovered in advance. So serviceable is this argument that a dispute based on authority terminates only when the principle of authority moves from the text to the interpretation of the text, i.e. when only one of the possible interpretations is declared authentic and official by the custodians of orthodoxy; so serviceable, that except for the case of the existence of an authorized and recognized interpreter, as in the realm of the Third International where Lenin was the interpreter of Marx, and then Stalin the interpreter of Lenin, the only battles without winners or losers are the battles of citations.[7]

Considered from a distance of years, disputes of this kind appear anachronistic; and if we judge them by what actually happened in spite of the texts, they appear inconclusive, if not downright counterproductive. In fact, one of the reasons for the crisis in Marxism is to be found precisely in those disputes' pretense of establishing a connection between the truth of Marxism and the outcomes of the revolution. Once the problem was posed in terms such that he who argued on the basis of the principle of authority was also its proponent, for a revolution to be a real revolution, it had to conform to the dictates of Marxism, and if analysis of the facts led to the belief that the revolution had not been a Marxist one, then the conclusion had to be that the revolution had been a mistaken revolution. But in the long run one could have argued the opposite, i.e., that the revolution had been a Marxist one, just as its leaders asserted, but that, given the outcome, it was Marx who was mistaken. It is just this reversal of judgment that is occurring before our very eyes: the crisis in Marxism is not

7. I recently came across the dispute that exploded from 1917 on between the right and left wings of the Italian Socialist Party, concerning the degree to which the October Revolution corresponded to Marx's philosophy of history. If we exempt Gramsci's famous article maintaining the paradoxical point that the revolution was undertaken against capital and thus not according to Marx's theory, then both supporters and antagonists of Lenin's actions did not have much trouble finding the appropriate texts or even their more appropriate interpretations of those texts to support opposite theses. Consider the torrents of ink consumed during those years to give meaning to Marx's saying that violence is the midwife of history. Did such an affirmation justify or condemn the Bolsheviks' violent seizure of power? That violence was the midwife of history meant that violence was justified on the one condition that it be employed at the right moment, i.e., when the fetus was mature. But was the upheaval that Lenin aimed for — the transformation of a hardly developed capitalist society such as the Russian one into a socialist society — was this mature or premature? But then, while Marx may have said that violence is the midwife of history, did not Engels say in an equally oft-cited passage of *The Peasant War in Germany* that the worst that can happen to the head of an extreme party is to be forced to assume power when the movement is not yet ripe? This is one example among thousands, but others could be offered. It suffices to recall that one of the classic texts of Leninism, *State and Revolution*, is essentially a commentary on texts by Marx and Engels, and that some famous battles among Marxists were fought with blows of citations, as the one between Lenin and Kautsky. Is it not perhaps true that these battles have only been possible because the immense number of texts and the inevitably diverse interpretations of any text at the litigants' disposition offered them a practically inexhaustible supply of arguments for and against?

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only objective, but also subjective, personal and existential. When confronted with a Stalinism that has finally been exposed, and with the Soviet societal structures' continual intransigence despite its having been unmasked, Marxists begin to ask themselves, at first horrified, then distraught — but intrigued by the discovery — whether the responsibility should not be sought farther away, in Lenin's own conduct, and even further, in Marx's own theory. If at the beginning of the revolution the connection between Marxism and the revolution was used primarily to condemn the revolution, sixty years later the same connection is often used to condemn Marx.[8]

If, after decades, the dispute over the October revolution's having followed Marx's predictions appears inconclusive, I ask myself what an historian will think in fifty years of today's debate dividing several authoritative members of the Italian Socialist Party. This debate concerns the *amount* of Marxism contained in an enterprise that proposes to provide a picture of the internal and international situation and to derive from it a reformist policy not prone to fantasy, or, to use Giolitti's term, a policy of a "possible socialism". This is an enterprise that by its very nature has to be judged on the basis of its ability to focus on the big problems of contemporary society and to indicate solutions consistent with the original fundamental and unrelinquishable inspiration of democractic socialism — a polity that embraces the democratic method and socialist enterprise and, above all, that manages to combine them persuasively. For the future historian the proof will be in the pudding itself, and I doubt he will judge it by its ingredients. Metaphors aside, I doubt he will condemn history for having been inadequately Marxist, or that he will absolve it for having remained faithful to the doctrine of the sacred forefathers.

As for the second point, I am not the one who is saying that Marxism is in crisis.[9] The present crisis in Marxism is a very different thing from so many other crises in Marxism which, at various time, produced sterile and hybrid combinations of Marx's philosophy with other philosophies, i.e., the different "revisionism". For what reasons and with what intentions Marxism was linked with the most varied of philosophies, even those opposed among themselves, from positivist to neo-Kantian, from Bergsonian to phenomenological, from structuralist to psychoanalytic, is still a problem to be fully investigated. I do not know whether there have been other philosophies that have undergone such tests: even more surprising is that such a test be

8. I was struck by reading in an interview that Roy Medvedev, one of the most intelligent and culturally solid representatives of the "dissent," conceded to Piero Ostellino that, "in Russia, it was actually the Mensheviks rather than the Bolsheviks who more strictly followed Marx's formulas." Cf. Roy Medvedev, *Intervista sul Dissenso nell'URSS*, edited by Piero Ostellino (Bari, 1977), p. 137. Ah, those blasted formulas! So the Mensheviks were supposedly right according to the formulas. But according to history, it was Lenin who was right, with or without Marx.

9. I must confess that, having been in contact with university students showing an unprecedentedly violent interest in Marxism in recent years, especially after 1968, I had been unaware of it. Yes, I protested against Marxomania, but I did not foresee the approach of the black cloud of Marxophobia, i.e., the "new philosophers." Of course, when I speak of Marxism in crisis I am not referring to those undertakers who raise macabre flags portraying a skull and cross-bones with the words underneath, "Marx is dead." We all recall the accident that befell Croce when, in 1938, he wrote the famous account of 40 years of history originally entitled, "How Theoretical Marxism Emerged and Died in Italy" (actually using the word "died"). Since then, Marxism has been reborn in Italy and elsewhere at least three or four times. Instead, I am referring to the growing awareness within Marxist circles themselves that Marx's works have to be subjected to a theoretical, historical and political critique, as does every other work; they have to be compared with the other great works that have illuminated the course of history and have been inserted in that history.

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applied to a work such as Marx's, which, while unsystematic, is authoritative. It always somewhat boldly gives the impression of saying, "You're either for me or against me." Still, the history of Marx's philosophy is marked by these strange unions. But while these revisionist combinations are typically philosophical operations, seeking either to subdue the aggressive attack of Marx's destructive criticism or, on the contrary, show its respectability, or validate it as a philosophy, today the crisis in Marxism is a refutation of dogmatic Marxism. Or, as is also claimed, the crisis in Marxism appears as the search for the scientific nucleus of Marx's works and, thus, for Marx's contribution to that collective and progressive enterprise known as the science or sciences of society that do not tolerate the "isms" found in philosophy.

Undoubtedly, the current crisis in Marxism developed in order to criticize Marxism's prtense of being a science, and thus developed as a scientific critique (Marxism as transition from utopian to scientific socialism). But if Marxism is in crisis, and if the crisis lies in the inadequacy of its scientific status (Colletti),[10] in the important gaps (Althusser),[11] or in the sudden occurrence of problems that Marx and Engels could not have predicted (Medvedev),[12] it also means that Marxism has become an

10. Lucio Colletti has addressed the subject various times. In one of his last statements, in the same words I might have used myself, he said, "it is not an issue of erasing Marx's work which remains a classic, but of having the courage to compile history's challenges and to re-evaluate everything without the fear of committing 'sacrilege'." Cf. Lucio Colletti, "La Crisi del Marxismo," in *Mondoperaio*, No. 11 (November 1977), p. 59. In another article in *L'Espresso*, Colletti explains that "to re-evaluate everything" means questioning the "status of Marxism" as a science, or its "logic," with the goal of internally analyzing not only its political theory, already accused many times of having gaps, contradictions and superficialities, but also its economic theory, constructed on deterministic presuppositions and pervaded with certain "philosophical melancholiness" about which science does not give a hoot.

11. During the Venetian convention of "Il Manifesto," Althusser announced the "crisis in Marxism" after having had a crowd of devoted disciples long believe from his position of high standing that to be initiated to true science one had to "read *Capital*." I take it that from now on reading *Capital* will no longer be sufficient. It will be necessary to read something else. What else? Althusser does not say, but he is already asserting that the crisis in Marxism comes from a long way off, and, naturally, he makes it stem from Stalinism, with that typical operation of "reductio ad Stalinum," with which all communist parties continue to relieve their guilt complex of more than 20 years by blaming the dead and exhumed Big Daddy. However, he gives us to understand that, in investigating the depths of unresolved difficulties in Marxism, the critical analysis must go as far back as Marx himself. He opens by observing that in Marx and Lenin, two gaps of "great importance" can be found: there is neither a theory of the state nor a theory of the organizations participating in the class struggle, such as the party and labor unions. Althusser does not now specify whether these gaps have to be filled, as a lawyer would say, with the method of self-integration or with that of hetero-integration, i.e., by staying within the system or going outside of it. But the fact remains that, if the gaps are of great importance, then the deficiencies in Marxism are serious enough to be probably incapable of being filled through Marxism alone.

12. After having recognized that Marx precipitated a radical shift in the social sciences with his works, Medvedev, in the previously cited interview, says that he does not understand why Marx's discoveries have to be personalized to the point of constituting an "ism": something that does not occur and has not occurred with other scientists. Students of celestial bodies are called astronomers and not Galileans, and students of the animal world are called biologists and not Darwinists. Therefore, he does not see why students of human society have to call themselves Marxists, despite Marx's merits, and not simply economists or sociologists. During the last century, he argues, infinite problems have emerged of which Marx and Engels could have no inkling, and which cannot remain unresolved because the founding fathers did not confront them. In addition, new studies have shown that not all questions were correctly resolved by Marx and Engels. This should not be surprising "because this happens in the development of every science." Thus he concludes: "Precisely in terms of the goal of facilitating social sciences' development, it is better to speak today not of Marxism-Leninism but of scientific socialism."

Unlike Medvedev, Umberto Cerroni is not a dissident but a non-dogmatic Marxist. However

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inadequate criterion to evaluate a 1978 Italian Socialist Party's perspective.

Althusser mentions the lack of a theory of the state as among the important gaps. That this is not a novel position does not diminish the enormous impact that this statement, coming from a leading Marxist scholar, has on current debates. Only recently did I happen to read for the first time the famous hand-book in which Bukharin proposed to trace the fundamental themes in *Theory of Historical Materialism*. Imagine my surprise in noting that in this philosophical summary of Marxism, written during the years the Bolshevik party was constructing the new state, only a few insignificant pages were dedicated to the problem of political institutions. Here one reads, repeated under varios guises, that the state is the instrument of class domination and that "the economic structure of a society also determines the structure of its political state." There is not one word on what the state's organs of power would be, on what the institutions through which citizens exercise control over this power would be, and not even the slightest reference to classic themes such as forms of goverment, of democracy and dictatorship, or representation and delegation. Once again, what must have been the fatal effect of Marxist and Engelsian theory became clear to me, a theory according to which the state is the combination of the repressive apparatae, where the more state-like it is, the more repressive it is. For contrast I thought about a text like *The federalist* accompanying the birth of the American Constitution, and about the quantity of ideas that the three authors liberally disseminated throughout concerning republic and democracy, the unitary state, the confederacy and the federal state, and the separation and distribution of powers. I am aware that the theory of the state as a repressive instrument at the service of one class has been criticized and rejected by many Marxists. But this change in positions, which anyhow was obtained through a reinterpretation of Marxist texts, i.e. once again by not abandoning the theory but by giving it a new interpretation, has only contributed to the confusion. Today one finds Marxists prepared to swear on the relative autonomy of politics, but this does not require upsetting Marx. There are others who, in order to reject the insinuation that the Soviet Union is not a socialist country, end up arguing that it is basically a socialist country with a repressive superstructure, i.e., accepting the not very Marxist thesis that the economic base and the political superstructure can each go their own way.

But I will limit myself to adding a more specific observation o the inadequacy of Marxist theory of the state. The definition of the state as an instrument of domination

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the conclusions that he reaches are not very different. In an essay entitled, "Problems of the Transition to Socialism," (in *Critica Marxista, vol. XIV, 1976, p. 60*] he criticizes the Marx-citation-mania, and asserts that Marxism has to be reconstructed as a "social science in progress" and has to be measured "against all serious theoretical propositions and integrated with all well-founded analytic concepts." How to distinguish between serious and non-serious propositions, and between well-founded and unfounded analytic concepts — there's the rub. The answer to these questions is nothing more or less than the problem of science. Thus, the essence of Cerroni's discussion is clear enough: if Marx's works are to be considered scientific, as all other works that fall within the collective enterprise of the social sciences, it has to be subjected to continual revision. Cerroni does not stop here. Shortly thereafter, he asserts that it is a matter of aggregating the "new concepts" around a theoretical axis which is "consistent and unrelinquishable," i.e., "the analytic-scientific explanation begun by Marx of a modern society considered to be an historical materialist system supported by its own regularities on which the explanation continually returns to try out its hypotheses, and if necessary to correct them." Who would challenge the hypothesis that modern society (and why not ancient societies also?) is an historical materialist society supported by its own regularities? Those who do not believe that a social formation has its own regularities should not waste time being social scientists. They should merely submit to the forces of chance or to the mysterious designs of an inscrutable providence.

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over a class defines the state in its relations with individuals or groups or classes existing within it. It emphatically does not define it in its relations with other states. And yet it is in these relations that the nature of political power manifests itself in its most outstanding way, i.e., power that in order to prevail resorts ultimately to force. In its relations with other states, a state is not necessarily an instrument of domination over a class or, at least, not in the same sense in which it is internally. It is not the instrument of domination of a dominating class over its own dominated class, but an instrument of domination of a dominating class towards other dominating classes. From this point of view, the never historically disproven old theory of State-power is much more explanatory than the Marxist one, and inasmuch as it is tied to it, so is the theory of power elites more explanatory than the class theory. With the theory of the state as class domination one can explain the nature of the capitalist state (but much less the Soviet state, unless one invents a "new class" having nothing to do with classes in the Marxist sense).

The great stage on which the destiny of the world unfolds is the international community and the actors on this stage are the power elites in their respective states. Assume the not at all hypothetical case that a dominated class, or the historical representatives of this class, take power. Having achieved power, the once dominated class (even hypothetically) that began the process of elimination of classes within the state in which it has seized power, becomes a dominating class with respect to dominating classes in other states. Even in the case in which the power of the two states is very unequal, the relation between the one's dominating class and the other's dominating class, even if it is in the specific case a relation of superior and inferior, cannot be compared to the relations of antagonistic classes in the Marxist sense, which is a relation founded on the different place that each occupies in the process of production. But there are many cases in which there are states of equal power. At any rate, the dominating class of even a state whose power is small, if forced to bend to a stronger state's dominating class, will not miss the occasion to show all the power at its disposal as a sovereign state with respect to another weaker state. Only those who continually repeated that the state is the instrument of class domination would have gone completely beserk when faced with the Russian-Chinese conflict, and could not have given a plausible explanation for the war between Vietnam and Cambodia or between Somalia and Ethiopia. Thus would not the first step in achieving an explanation be the abandonment of one of the sacred canons of Marxism — according to which the good Marxist distinguishes himself from the wicked ideologue — that the class struggle is the impetus of history?

Besides important gaps there are also things that Marx could not have foreseen. It is not Marx's fault, despite the power of his scientific imagination which even the most vehement anti-Marxists would not deny, the pace of history has been so frenzied during these last hundred years as to make his predictions appear either too timid with respect to technical progress or too optimistic with respect to the dimensions of possible destructive effects.

Out of all these unforeseen new developments, at least one has to be kept in mind, because it puts into question every project of a future society that does not take it into account: the limitation of resources. One of the few things of which we are certain is this: the human race lives in a finite universe. In a finite universe the development of man's life on earth is guaranteed only by a continually balanced state between increases in population and increases in resources. And yet till now this question,

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which is the problem of all problems, has not been posed with the same force with which we are obliged to pose it if we wish to survive. Another theme in Marx requiring examination is the thesis according to which, in a communist society, the prevailing principle should be: "To each according to his needs." This is the most contradictory idea imaginale in terms of the inevitable prediction concerning insufficient resources and indiscriminate increases in population. That each could receive according to his own needs is a maxim that leads one to think of an enormously abundant society, if not a world of fairy tales, in which everyone possesses the magic table cloth and one need only say, "Table, set thyself!" to receive a sumptuous meal. Besides being vague, it is an anachronistic maxim, no less than the thesis of the extinction of the state, adapted to fit times dominated by the idea of indefinite progress.

After two millennia, the Promethean myth of man as master of nature is in crisis: mastered nature in rebelling, as did slaves from other eras. The big theme in Marxism was that of the expolitation of man by man. But today nobody can avoid also addressing the problem of exploitation of nature on the part of man taken as a whole. Till now it has been considered illicit, at least morally, to treat man as object, but not even nature appears to be demanding that it no longer be considered as object. Till now the relation of exploitation, when occurring between man and man, has been considered base, but has been extolled as proof of man's superiority over all other beings when occurring between man and nature. Marx posed the problem of man's alienation from man; but alienation, the idea outside itself, to use the Hegelian concept, has always been considerd the proper lot of nature, to the point that only the permanent and total alienation of nature, i.e., its complete submission to man's domination, allowed man to completely realize himself, to achieve the *regnum hominis*. But today how is it possible to ignore the problem of nature's unconditional submission to man's power? Is it still possible to ignore that a humanistic ethic, of which the fundamental maxim could be formulated this way, "Treat every man as a person, that is, as an end in himself, and nature as thing, that is, as a means," taken to its extreme consequences, could produce the effect of nature's revenge on man? But these are questions to which one can only give answers by acknowledging the radical transformation (up until a few decades ago both unpredictable and unpredicted) occurring in the relations between man and nature, and not by consulting famous texts. The socialists devoted an essay to the problem with the title: "The Rupture of the Ecological Balance". Should they not have done so, merely because the problem had not previously been a matter of concern to Marxism?

I will stop here. I have tried to address two points: (1) whether there is any agreement on a definition of Marxism, as to allow a judgment concerning the degree to which an enterprise is "Marxist"; and (2) whether, assuming there is a definition, what can still call itself Marxism, can provide exhaustive answers to today's problems. As for the first point, I have sought to demonstrate that a socialist party has the right to be neither Marxist nor anti-Marxist. It has both to offer directions for the future and not deny the transformations to the workers' movement and to all who, despite the vileness into which we have fallen, avow that the time has not come to renounce the struggle for a freer and juster society. Possible socialism means two things: It means (a) that socialism is not impossible, and in this manner of speaking, possible socialism means that the proposal of a socialist society is not utopian; and (b) that it is not necessary and, in this sense, possible socialism means affirming that the advent of a socialist society is not inevitable. In other words, possible socialism means that socialism can become a reality through the conscious and intelligent work of people,

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but it also might not become a reality, and its future is not guaranteed by the irresistible force of things. To conclude, the enterprise is moving in this direction and is interpretable in both senses. In one sense it keeps its feet enough on the ground not to be mistaken for one of the many voyages to the happy islands where utopians used to place their ideal societies, and of which the history of socialist thought is full, nor can it be mistaken for one of the many prophecies on the imminent and necessary end to capitalism that, although pronounced thousands of times during the course of this last century, have never come true.

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REVIEWS:

Jürgen Habermas. *Zur Rekonstruktion des historischen Materialismus.* Frankfurt am Main: 1976.

Habermas' recent "reconstruction of historical materialism"[1] involves a general approach to certain Marxian problematics and is carried out in terms of contemporary theories of evolution and communication. While such "reconstruction" is legitimate, it is clear that Habermas does not adequately deal with certain crucial aspects of Marx's thought. This is not to advocate the refutation of Habermas in the name of an imaginary Marxist orthodoxy, since there is no *one* orthodoxy, but only tendencies toward a plurality of Marxisms.[2]

The essentials of Habermas' interpretation are present already in *Knowledge and Human Interests*, where Marx is criticized for having misunderstood his own discoveries. According to Habermas, Marx's 1844 transition from a dialectic of spirit to a dialectic of labor was already prefigured in Hegel's mature system.[3] But this is followed and partly neutralized by the development of an objectivist and determinist version of social theory that obscures the necessary difference between social theory and empirical science. Habermas suggests that Marx's conversion to objectivism is due to a certain conception of subjectivity, linking the early Marx with German idealism. What makes this outcome inevitable is Marx's retreat from epistemology and his failure to re-examine Hegel's negation of critical epistemology in its Kantian context. The implicit epistemological corollary of the Marxian concept of labor, i.e., a materialist concept of synthesis, remains underdeveloped in comparison with categories relevant to socioeconomic analysis, such as forces and relations of production. Thus, the absence of a materialist critique of knowledge facilitates the gradual development of an undifferentiated objectivism. For Habermas, Marxian theory thus suffers from a structural disequilibrium: its dependence on a basically individualistic, "monological" conception of human activity, inherited from the philosophical tradition is offset by adjustments to the countervailing logic of a social analysis, but aggravated by displacing self-reflection with pre-critical materialism. The resulting confusion affects the theory of revolution and post-revolutionary emancipation. According to Habermas, if historical materialism is to be more than a simple instrument of interpretive historiography, it can only be conceived as a *theory of social evolution*. This requires the introduction of a problematic largely absent from Marx's works. At the same time, such a reconstruction of historical materialism modifies the relation between its various components. As a result, the material determinants of society are located at a more abstract level than in older versions of the theory, thereby clarifying and emphasizing previously neglected aspects such as cognitive structures and processes. Hence, Habermas concludes: "the dialectic of productive forces and relations of production operates through ideologies."[4]

Behind the derived objectivity of the productive forces, Habermas argues, there are certain mechanisms of cognition that reflect the deep structure of the labor process

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1. Shorter versions have been published in *Arena*, 38 (1975) and in *Theory and Society*, vol. 2, no. 3 (1975).
2. Cf. Norberto Bobbio "Is There a Marxist Theory of the State?" in *Telos*, no. 35 (Spring 1978), pp. 5-16.
3. Cf. J. Habermas, "Labor and Interaction: Remarks on Hegel's Jena *Philosophy of Mind*," in *Theory and Practice* (Boston, 1973), pp. 142-169.
4. J. Habermas, *Zur Rekonstruktion...*, p. 186.

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understood as instrumental action. A corresponding "logic of growing insight"[5] operates within social interaction and regulates the development of the relations of production as a special — and crucial — case of the latter. Habermas rejects the traditional conceptions of the primacy of productive forces. His alternative is based on a more complicated model in which the labor process plays a double role: first, it generates problems that can only be solved through a reshaping of the social context, but secondly, because of the human capacity of learning it also generates a cognitive surplus. In the first instance, this surplus accrues only to individuals and requires new structures of social integration in order to channeled toward technological progress. This is corroborated by the fact that, historically, major technological changes have *succeeded* structural changes in the relations of production, and not vice versa.[6] Cognitive determinants also intervene in social transformation, where the evolution from lower to higher forms of social integration depends on a different kind of knowledge (practical as distinguished from technical) which results from learning. Finally, the correlation of labor and society, or more precisely of instrumental action and social integration, is not a simple juxtaposition. This is because the cognitive components of both also form part of a third dimension, with its own distinctive logic of development: the world view. For Habermas, the rationalization of world views "from myth through religion to philosophy and ideology"[7] is an autonomous and necessary aspect of social evolution. The main points of the "reconstruction" proposed by Habermas are clear. On the one hand, he shares the Marxian view that the material conditions of existence of the human species, i.e., the appropriation of nature through social labor, form the ultimate determinants of society and its historical transformations. On the other hand, his analysis of the specific forms and contents of this determination diverges widely from both Marx and later Marxists. For Habermas, it is a "determination in the last instance" (in a much more radical sense than for Engels) whose main intermediate instances must also be specified in terms designed to prevent their dissolution in eclectic generalities about reciprocal interaction or the relative autonomy of "superstructures." According to Habermas, the material context of socio-cultural evolution exercises its formative influence through cognitive progress, through learning processes induced and oriented by universal structures of the human life-world based on social labor. It is impossible to extract from this formulaton a purely sociological theory of evolution, "bracketing" the philosophical implications.[8] Notwithstanding his increasing deviation from earlier positions of the Frankfurt School, Habermas remains faithful to its central contention that a critical theory of society can only be elaborated through a transformation of philosophy. While the more or less articulated, "metaphilosophical" problematic behind his analyses and hypotheses is never completely absent, and a critical evaluation cannot ignore it. Such evaluation must begin with the distinction between instrumental and communicative action, a distinction whose extensive reliance upon systems theory concepts has frequently been attacked by Marxist critics. While the idea that historical materialism a priori excludes such borrowings is manifestly absurd,[9] it can be shown that

5. J. Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis* (Boston, 1975), p. 14.
6. Cf. J. Habermas, *Zur Rekonstruktion...*, p. 164.
7. J. Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis*. p. 11.
8. Extensively quoted by Habermas, Klaus Eder's work on the origin of the state (*Die Entstehung staatlich organisierter Gesellschaften* [Frankfurt, 1976]) reveals a certain tendency to transform a philosophico-sociological problematic into a finished sociological theory.
9. J. Shapiro has aptly compared Habermas' attitude to systems theory to Marx's treatment of

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Habermas' dialogue with systems theory is determined by his conception of the relationship between labor and society. A more detailed analysis of this conception must therefore begin with his transformation of the Marxian notion of labor. This transformation involves a double frame of reference, structural and evolutionary, and leads to a double-edged result: it is both a radicalization and a reduction. Habermas seeks to show that the Marxian analysis of capitalist society — and a fortiori the purified and modernized critical theory that today can claim to be its intellectual heir — presupposes the additional and complementary category of symbolic interaction. At first, these two a priori determinants of knowledge (also defined as technical and practical "cognitive interests") are seen within a structural perspective; later reformulations increasingly shift the emphasis toward an evolutionary approach. "Labor and language are older than man and society,"[10] and form a pre-existent framework within which the constitution of the human species can take place. The decisive evolutionary threshold is only crossed through learning processes that are dependent on, but not coextensive with, labor and language. The genetic primacy of labor and language is related to a pre-anthropological state: "Not only homo sapiens, but even the hominids are distinguished from other primates in that they reproduce themselves through social labor and develop an economy."[11] In this view, the identification of Engels and other Marxist writers of the labor process with the evolutionary transition from nature to culture was doubly mistaken: they both unjustifiably telescoped successive evolutionary stages and overlooked the ultimately more revolutionary role of language.

In support of this thesis concerning the links between labor and its supposed "derivatives," Habermas introduces the concept of *instrumental action*: "What is decisive is the aspect of the purposeful reforming of material according to rules of instrumental action."[12] These basic rules are oriented to the global objectivation of nature, its subsumption under the perspective of possible technical control. Habermas holds that this "technical cognitive interest" determines (as a constituent principle, not as an external limit) both the necessary boundaries and the possible progress of knowledge with regard to nature. Its most general expression is the conceptualization of nature in terms of things and events.

In addition to its epistemological horizon, the place of instrumental action in the context of social evolution is also specified through an analogous conception of the productive forces: "The productive forces consist a) of the labor power of the producers, b) of technical knowledge, insofar as it is converted into production techniques; c) of organizational knowledge, insofar as it is efficiently employed to set labor power in motion to produce skilled labor, and to coordinate specialized labor (mobilization, qualification and organization of labor power). The productive forces determine the extent to which we can control natural processes and exploit natural resources."[13] The productive forces are thus reduced to their subjective dimension and their historical transformations to underlying intellectual mechanisms. Their logic of development is the extension and rationalization of technical knowledge. The material

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classical political economy (Reply to Miller's Review of Habermas' *Legitimation Crisis*, *Telos* 27 (1976).

10. J. Habermas, *Zur Rekonstruktion...*, p. 151.
11. J. Habermas, "Towards a Reconstruction of Historical Materialism," *Theory and Society*, vol. 2, no. 3 (1975), p. 288.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 287.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 289-90, translation altered.

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agencies of the labor process are significant only insofar as they represent the socially relevant objectivations of learning processes. Moreover, the productive implementation of technical knowledge is itself a social process, as is most conclusively borne out by the examples of revolutionary changes in social relations intervening between the growth of knowledge and the improvement of technology.[14]

The difference between Habermas and Marx on the conceptualization of the productive forces is striking. Without entering into textual details, it is evident that the most important works of Marx (the *1844 Manuscripts, The German Ideology, Grundrisse, Capital*) contain in fragmentary form a philosophical concept of labor much more complex than that of instrumental action. In assimilating the former to the latter, Habermas eliminates essential aspects of the Marxian contribution to critical theory.[15] The following points seem especially important. First, *for Marx, labor is not synonymous with objectivation*; rather, it forms the context within which different degrees and directions of objectivation are possible. Habermas is certainly right in interpreting the concept of social labor as a negation of the images of the subject within pre-Marxian philosophy,[16] but he goes too far in deducing from it a pragmatic or instrumentalist conception of experience and knowledge. This is not merely a question of limits to any given or concretely possible stage of objectivation. Even if valid in itself, the distinction between a dominated and a non-dominated sector of nature[17] obscures a more important point: there is a positive experience of nature as both the pre-existing basis and the unattainable horizon of instrumental action and its cognitive components. This primary experience is never systematically elucidated by Marx, but it is at least alluded to in some well-known formulations. For example, nature is described as the "inorganic body" of man, while the analysis of archaic communities in the *Grundrisse* centers on the notion of a *social appropriation of nature* which is more fundamental and extensive than that practical appropriation realized in the labor process. The labor process is understood as an encounter between man and nature. Nature is both subsumed under a project determined by a determining humanity and simultaneously disclosed through an experience that transcends the intrinsic limit of such projects. On the level of concrete historical processes, changing patterns of the productive forces thus comprise different ways of integrating nature into the process of production; these patterns are not merely a series of increasingly effective applications of an unchanging underlying paradigm. To begin with, Marx divides the objective components of the labor process into objects and instruments of labor, but this elementary classification is followed by a translation into historical terms that also modifies its content. The earth is defined as the "general object of labor," but the appropriation and instrumentalization of this object is realized in discontinuous stages that correspond to major turning points in the history of the species. Agriculture, the main achievement of the neolithic revolution, turns the earth into an instrument of labor. A second metamorphosis, the earth's incorporation into "a system of general exploitation of the natural and human qualities, a system of general utility,"[18] is an integral part of the capitalist revolution. The first steps in this

14. Cf. above, n. 6.
15. Cf. John Keane, "Habermas on Work and Interaction," *New German Critique*, 6, (Fall 1975); H.J. Krahl, *Konstitution und Klassenkampf* (Berlin, 1971).
16. J. Habermas, *Zur Rekonstruktion...*, p. 146.
17. These concepts play an important role in Max Raphael's attempt to construct a Marxist theory of knowledge (*Zur Erkenntnistheorie der konkreten Dialektik*, [Frankfurt, 1972]).
18. K. Marx, *Grundrisse* (London, 1973), p. 409.

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direction are connected with early European expansion, which initiates a *universalization of the productive forces* that *precedes* the definitive break-through of capitalist relations of production. Although the action of the latter is necessary to complete the process and to establish the capitalist mode of production, the functions of the productive forces are thus not purely derivative.

There is a second crucial point in *the Marxian perspective: the labor process is not a simple concretization of a general model of human activity* (instrumental action), which in its turn is strictly distinguished from an equally abstract and self-contained alternative (communicative action). Rather, the labor process is seen as part of a concrete and differentiated totality, within which it emerges and develops as one of two interconnected but heterogeneous dimensions. To conceptualize this other dimension, several neo-Marxist philosophers have adopted the category of praxis. Although the early Marx sometimes uses that expression in a related sense, later on it gives way to more tentative (and sometimes ambiguous) descriptions of developmental activity which is *autonomous* in the double sense of not being subordinated to external necessity and constituting the active self-expression of associated individuals.[19]

Neither the instrumentalist revision of the dialectic of labor nor the intellectualist sublimation of the productive forces proposed by Habermas is defensible as a further development of the Marxian project. Another key concept of historical materialism, that of the relations of production, presents a more complicated case. The insight that relations of production are also relations of communication, whose analysis calls for a conceptual apparatus which recognize their specificity, may be regarded as Habermas' major contribution to the development of critical Marxism. However, the objections voiced above bear upon this stage of the argument as well, since the links between the labor process and its social context are codetermined by the structure of the former. If the accusation of eliminating the dialectic of labor is true, it can also be shown that the proposed theory of social evolution is thereby weakened, if not invalidated. The analysis must deal successively with three interrelated aspects of this question: a) the frame of reference for Habermas' conceptualization of social relations in general and relations of production in particular; b) the specific definition of relations of production; and c) the problematic combination of the latter with the instrumentalist concept of labor.

The most general coordinates of the critical theory of society, as understood by Habermas, are *language* and *social integration*. His presentation of their reciprocal relationship is somewhat ambiguous. In *Legitimation Crisis*, the focus on social integration seems synonymous with the application of one of two paradigms, that of *life-world* as distinct from *systems*.[20] In his reflections on historical materialism, Habermas equates his concept of social integration with the Durkheimian one of "integration through norms and values."[21] Finally, the essay entitled *History and Evolution*[22] explicitly reduces social integration and system integration to particular facets of the contrasting paradigms. The relationship between language and social integration can be clarified, however, if we interpret Habermas' remarks on the process of hominization in the light of his theses on communicative competence and universal pragmatics. According to this perspective, the social life of the primates is

19. *Ibid.*, p. 325.
20. J. Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis*, p. 4.
21. J. Habermas, *Towards a Reconstruction*..., p. 292.
22. J. Habermas, "History and Evolution," pp. 5-45 in this issue of *Telos*.

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based on "a certain kind of symbolic interaction,"[23] but the transition to a social role system regulated by intersubjectively valid norms of action presupposes the emergence of language. Moreover, language is irreducible to its integrative function. It is not only intrinsically capable of negating any specific form of social integration; through the separation of discourse from communicative action it is also capable of negating its own original immersion in the interactive context. From a structural point of view, there is an inbuilt tension within social integration. Identical with the possible conditions of its determinate negation, the general mechanism of social integration a priori rules out its functionalist reduction and distinguishes it sharply from the relation between man and nature.

Concerning the relations of production, Habermas understands these as "those institutions and social mechanisms which specify in what way labor can be combined with the available means of production. The regulation of access to the means of production or the channels of control of socially utilized labor also indirectly determines the distribution of the social wealth."[24] The initial approach here closely parallels that of Godelier, who defines the relations of production as a system "regulating the rights of groups and of individuals in respect to the means of production and their access to the products of their labor."[25] In both cases, the relations of production are seen as *preconditions* rather than as *components* of the process of production; they determine *access* and *control* rather than *organization*. Both reject the functionalist interpretation of the primacy of the labor process, and emphasize the crucial and autonomous role of the social context. This common basis gives rise to very different theoretical constructions. Whereas Habermas develops the "trans-functionalist" tendencies of historical materialism, Godelier ultimately restores, even if in a more abstract form, the objectivist notion of productive forces determining directly or indirectly the "necessary connections" within a hierarchy of social structures. Godelier also analyses the relations of production in terms of two categories, *function* and *institution*. While the function of these relations remains constant (its concrete content depending on the state of the productive forces), its institutional forms vary widely. Habermas adds a third category, *communication*. The relations of production thereby acquire a more differentiated content and a positive role within the institutional order. For Habermas, the possibilities and limits of communicative action are circumscribed by prevalent forms of social integration. When situated in this context, the relations of production are therefore neither dissolved in the general notion of social relations oriented to the appropriation and transformation of nature, nor arbitrarily restricted to property relations. They are specified as the "institutional core" which both regulates access to, and control over, the means of production, and "determines the dominant form of social integration."[26] As the empirical evidence shows, their dominant position is successively occupied by kinship systems, political power and the generalized exchange of commodities, the last two being different ways of stabilizing class relations.

Finally, compared with Godelier's retention of an unquestioned primacy of the economic function as such, Habermas' grounding of historical materialism in a theory of communication obviously permits a more radical departure from both economism

23. J. Habermas, *Towards a Reconstruction...*, p. 288.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 290.
25. M. Godelier, "Modes of Production, Kinship, and Demographic Structures," in *Marxist Analyses and Social Anthropology*, ed. M. Bloch (London, 1975), p. 14.
26. J. Habermas, *Towards a Reconstruction...*, p. 292.

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and the implications of its concept of labor. As we have seen, the "behavioral system of instrumental action" is a closed, self-sufficient structure with its own developmental logic; there is no scope for *social transformations* of the labor process. The relations of production are reduced to an external framework, affecting the input and the output of the process of production, but not its internal relations. This reduction forms the background to Habermas' conceptualization of class relations. He accepts the core of the traditional Marxist notion of the appropriation of the surplus product by a privileged minority as a necessary but not sufficient condition of a class society. What is seen to be lacking is an adequate grasp of class antagonism as "systematically distorted communication," as the necessarily incomplete negation of an underlying communicative relationship. The social relations accompanying and mediating the appropriation of the surplus are not simply functional arrangements. They represent — to a varying degree, according to the different types of class society — a contradictory combination of the basic prerequisites of social integration (founded ultimately within everyday language) with repressive structures that neutralize or insulate their communicative potential.

This is perhaps the most interesting point in Habermas' program of reconstruction, and it seems appropriate to take a closer look at some of its connotations. The privileged appropriation of the surplus did not appear in Habermas' general definition of relations of production cited above. From his point of view, this appropriation would constitute a special case of the "distribution of the social wealth," which in turn depends on the mechanisms regulating access to, and control over, the means of production. Since Habermas has eliminated the dialectic of labor at the outset, its derivative aspects obviously cannot be thematized either. The effect is analogous to what has already been observed with respect to his concept of instrumental action: a whole complex of analytical distinctions, the main outlines of which were traced by Marx, is discarded without any sustained argument. As summarized above, the focal points of this problematic closely correspond to those of the Marxian concept of labor. In the first place, the material basis of antagonistic social relations can be seen as a process of *secondary appropriation*, overlying the *primary appropriation* of nature and resulting in a determinate modification of its constituent parts. Marx simultaneously links and contrasts the labor process with a comprehensive appropriation of nature and construes the relationship between them as a unity of identity and difference. The objectivating tendencies of the labor process unfold within the limits and perspectives imposed by this context. As a total social phenomenon (the appropriation of the surplus necessarily involves a political dimension, whatever the particular configuration of political and economic structures), class domination signifies an overall instrumentalization of the labor process. While the pure and unmitigated form of this relationship is restricted to pre-capitalist class societies (where "one part of society is treated by the other as itself merely an inorganic and natural condition of its own reproduction"),[27] the main point of Marx's critique of political economy is to show that capitalism perpetuates its essential features in a dynamic and potentially explosive pattern of social relations whose principle of organization is the market. Within the abstract matrix of class antagonisms, the concept of appropriation has a double meaning: over and above the power to dispose of the surplus, it refers to a socio-cultural determination of the means and ends involved.

27. K. Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 389.

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The structures and functions of the surplus are thus an integral part of class domination, not a displaced manifestation of laws or rules governing the labor process as such. While it remains insufficiently developed, the concept of the objective of production[28] helps clarify this insight. The labor process, considered from an anthropological point of view, is an open structure within which need and activity confront and combine with each other, activity being rooted in need but at the same time transcending and potentially transforming it. The objective of production is the social mechanism through which this open structure is closed and regulated. An analysis of its various forms must start with the basic distinction between use value and exchange value or, in more general terms, concrete and abstract labor. To associate a specific type of class domination with a corresponding objective of production is not to convert the dominant class into a collective subject, subordinating the process of production to a conscious project. The connection should rather be seen as a structural one, linking the forms of movement of social production and reproduction (e.g., the accumulation of capital) with the form and degree of social identity attainable by the dominant class (e.g., the unity of fusion and separation inherent in the capitalist relations of production). A class-based objective of production relegates the immanent teleology of the labor process to a subordinate position, thus strengthening the instrumental aspect at the expense of its wider context. Class domination also affects and transforms in a particular way the general appropriation of nature, dissolving its nexus with the labor process and developing it along separate lines. *The process involves both political and ideological structures.* Thus, in its historically varying forms, the *territorial state* and the dynamics of territorial expansion must be reckoned among the primary constituents of class society and the determinants of its interaction with nature, including the development of the productive forces. At the *ideological* level of social praxis, the appropriation of nature moves from a primarily material to a primarily symbolic plane, which finds expression in the construction of a natural or cosmic order with legitimating functions. As Habermas and Eder[29] rightly emphasize, the transformation and rationalization of the world-view is an important and relatively autonomous part of the transition to class society, not a mere reflection of changes taking place elsewhere. Accordingly, changing interpretations of the world exist and operate as constituent parts of social systems, while at the same time obeying their own logic of development.

For Habermas and Eder, the interconnections between world-views and forms of class domination are systematized, modified and ultimately dissolved by a process of communicative rationalization. After generating increasingly abstract principles of legitimation, this process culminates in the definitive disintegration of traditional world-views. This both allows a transfer of legitimatory functions to the relations of production (the market becomes the principle of organization of "liberal capitalism") and eventually aggravates the permanent legitimation crisis of class society which in

28. An implicit definition of this concept can of course be found in Marx, mainly in his distinction between modes of production based on use value and on exchange value. The first explicit formulation appears — as far as I know — in the "Open Letter to the Polish Workers' Party" by Kuron and Modzelewski (written in 1964), where it plays an important role in the analysis of bureaucratic domination. In an earlier publication (J.P. Arnason, *Von Marcuse zu Marx* [Neuwied, 1971] p. 195-96), I have discussed some implications of their argument. Göran Therborn (*Science Class and Society* [London, 1976], p. 376-86) includes the objective of production in a comprehensive definition of the relations of production; however, it seems more appropriate to regard it as a specific structure linking the latter with the productive forces.

29. Cf. K. Eder, *op. cit.*

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late capitalism takes on an unprecedented and acute form.[30] The first step in the rationalization of world views coincides with the transition from neolithic society to early civilization. This entails the constitution of the mythological world-view as distinct from the system of social action, the former being sufficiently autonomous to legitimate the latter. In spite of this elementary differentiation, a fundamental similarity or "isomorphism" (Eder) of nature and culture is retained. Its disappearance signals the second breakthrough of rationalization: the construction of a normative order independent of nature and permitting a more radical separation of natural and social phenomena. This evolution of the world-view is the main characteristic of developed civilizations between the eighth and third centuries B.C. The third stage, that of capitalist modernity, is marked by a gradual dissolution of the very infrastructure of world-views, and not merely their manifest forms. Although bourgeois culture needs the "motivationally effective supplementation by traditional world-views,"[31] in the long run "dominant elements of the cultural tradition are losing the character of world-views, that is, of interpretations of the world, nature, and history as a whole."[32] The ontological synthesis of nature and society loses both its efficacy and its legitimacy. It gives way to a radically new constellation, a direct confrontation of objectivity and intersubjectivity without any mediation at a higher level. However complex and varied the successive configurations may be, in the last instance the process as a whole is — as Eder stresses even more than Habermas — conditioned by humanity's progressive domination of nature. It is the growing control over natural processes that makes possible the systematization of the mythological world view; it is the all-embracing scientific and technical objectivation of nature that finally discredits the construction of world-views as such. In short, the appropriation of nature is reduced to an *irreversible* process of objectification and control, and the interpretation of the world appears as an attendant symptom, which partly occludes its own origins. The cosmic order of traditional world views turns out to be the temporary precipitate of a process that ultimately destroys it.

Notwithstanding its importance, the negative side of this thesis consists in its elimination of a problematic that was recognized as important by earlier representatives of critical theory and subjected to a particularly incisive, though incomplete, analysis in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. For Habermas, the possibility of systematic interpretations of the world is opened and, at a later stage, ruled out by the interaction between man and nature. The realization of this possibility and the emergence of partial substitutes after its disappearance are explained by needs of the social system, i.e., the need for a legitimating subsystem as part and parcel of class domination. For Adorno and Horkheimer, the relationship is more complicated. Behind even the earliest mythological projections of a natural order, they detect the *social* — not merely technical — imperative of domination, actively conditioning the experience of nature and repressing its dysfunctional aspects. Habermas' rejection of this perspective is, of course, not an arbitrary decision. It is directly conditioned by his reinterpretation of the concept of labor and therefore necessarily implicated in any criticism of the latter. For, if the appropriation of nature is reduced to a self-propelled and a priori unlimited process of objectification, some of the most pressing questions of

30. J. Habermas, *Zur Rekonstruktion*..., p. 180; "class societies are structurally incapable of meeting the demand for legitimation they themselves engender."
31. J. Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis*, p. 77.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 80.

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critical theory must seem devoid of meaning. There ceases to be space for an analysis of the social context which isolates and magnifies either the objectifying tendencies of the labor process and interpretations of the world or the specifically capitalist phenomenon of abstract labor.

A further aspect of Habermas' approach to the theory of class needs consideration. The fragmentary Marxian concept of class recognizes — at least in principle — the effect of antagonistic social relations upon the differentiated unity of labor and praxis. When this difference is effaced through the general concept of instrumental action, the class concept is correspondingly simplified. The double caveat of the *German Ideology* is lost: it is the separation of labor from "self-activity" which leads to the emergence and consolidation of class societies; conversely, the prospect of a classless society depends upon the revolutionary destruction of the capitalist order and the reunification of labor and "self-activity." In the unfinished retrospective summary of his analysis of capitalism in the last chapters of the third volume of *Capital*, Marx raises the same problem in different terms. Particularly revealing is the following appraisal of the "civilizing aspects" of capital, which "enforces...surplus labor in a manner and under conditions which are more advantageous to the development of the productive forces, social relations, and the creation of the elements for a new and higher form than under the preceding forms of slavery, serfdom, etc. Thus it gives rise to a stage, on the one hand, in which coercion and monopolization of social development (including its material and intellectual advantages) by one portion of society at the expense of the other are eliminated; on the other hand, it creates the material means and embryonic conditions, making it possible in a higher form of society to combine this surplus labor with a greater reduction of time devoted to material labor in general."[33] Several important lines of argument are here condensed. To begin with, the "monopolization of social development" represents an appropriation of *social creativity*. The formulation chosen by Marx implies the recognition of a cumulative process producing both material and intellectual results which, in the long run, are incompatible with the framework of class domination. The deflection of this process is brought about through the superimposed hegemony of particular interests. Far from reducing class relations to their economic infrastructure, this analytical model includes the "super-structural" coefficients as constituents of secondary appropriation. The class struggle is not an ultimate reality, self-contained and intelligible in itself. Rather, it is an antagonistic relation to a common context which can be conceptualized either as an objective process or as subjective activity in the form of praxis. Thus, the class structuration of society presupposes a differentiated and polarized anthropological context which displays a tension between its particular and universal aspects. Class relations can never be reduced to a pure collision of particular interests.

Now it is clear that the elements of an anthropologically grounded theory of class, introduced but never systematically developed by Marx, have not entered into the mainstream of the Marxist tradition. Since the ascendancy of economism has been particularly complete and prolonged, it is worthwhile to look at Habermas' program of reconstruction from this angle. In the preceding sections, I have argued that his concept of instrumental action simplifies the interrelations between man and nature and isolates them from the contradictions and transformations of society. A similar effect on the conception of social interaction itself is less direct, but

33. K. Marx, *Capital*, vol. III (Moscow, 1977), p. 819.

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nevertheless traceable.

For Habermas, the social process is grounded in a universal logic of evolution, a progressive rationalization of normative structures, to which antagonistic forms of interaction are unequivocally subordinated. Class struggle and social movements are accorded an important place among the mechanisms and motors of social evolution, but they only operate within the limits laid down in advance through the logical sequence of possible forms of social integration. Habermas sees the difficulties inherent in this position: how is the assumption of a cumulative *and* evolutionary learning process to be reconciled with the fact of increased exploitation and oppression which accompanies the transition from neolithic society to civilization? If there is a developmental logic behind the growth of moral-practical knowledge and its embodiments in structures of interaction, civilization is necessarily synonymous with moral progress. It is equally clear that, set against the emancipatory *telos* of communicative action and compared with the much more limited range of inequality and domination in primitive societies, the institutionalization of classes must appear as a regression, a long-term deviation from the logic of development. "How is this dialectic of progress to be explained?[34] The solution suggested by Habermas — and it should be noted that he calls it a "hazardous scheme"[35] — understands the progressive restructuring of social integration as conditioned and counterbalanced by a permanent ambivalence of system integration. "The dialectic of progress shows itself in the fact that with the acquisition of capacities for solving problems goes the consciousness of new constellations of problems."[36]

The systems-theoretic approach permits a more detailed explication of this "dialectic." New resources, systematically generated by the evolutionary process, also represent new dimensions of scarcity and new historical needs. Thus, the emergence of the sociocultural form of life generates the problem of delimitation and self-preservation *vis-à-vis* external nature. An advanced consciousness of this problem and systematic attempts to solve it can be seen in the mythological constructions of neolithic societies. With the first civilizations, further rationalization of both the material and the intellectual domination of external nature produces an internal system problem: the self-regulation of the social system through the state. The overriding importance of this problem is reflected in the experience of oppression and arbitrary power, and the immediate function of the increasingly rationalized world-views is to deactivate the resultant conflicts. The rise of modern societies brings to the fore the problem of self-regulated exchange between nature and society. The accumulation of material wealth is institutionalized as the main imperative of the system, and social conflicts progressively center on unequal distribution rather than oppression (in traditional Marxist terms: the immediate forms of class struggle are economic rather than political). Certain trends in contemporary societies permit at least a tentative characterization of the next possible stage. For, if the functional primacy of the scientific and educational subsystems is seen as the distinctive trait of a post-modern society, the corresponding system problem would be that of a self-regulated exchange between the social system and inner nature. In this case, the "scarce resources" would be motivation and sense; at this hypothetical stage, the inner limits of socialization would be directly exposed.

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34. J. Habermas, *Zur Rekonstruktion*..., p. 180.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 183.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 181. The argument summarized here is developed by Habermas on pp. 181-83.

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Aside from questions regarding the distinction between traditional and modern forms of class struggle, the scheme as a whole has far-reaching implications. The process described and (partly anticipated) by Habermas does not exhibit a developmental logic in the strict sense. This process can be divided into a finite and exhaustive sequence of phases, but there is no progressive rationalization, no direction imposed by underlying principles working themselves out in successive steps. Nevertheless, the evolutionary order of system problems bears on the problem of moral-practical progress insofar as it seeks to explain the inherently self-critical character of progress which results from the ineradicable tension between resources and needs. For Habermas, the independence and universality of the social process *vis-à-vis* its antagonistic subjects is thus much more securely established than for Marx. Not only are the possible historical horizons and consequences of class struggles and social movements circumscribed by the developmental logic of communicative action. There is also a second dimension of objectivity, constituted by the recurrent pattern of systemic processes, determining the historical form and the experiential content of progress. Social integration is thus subordinated (although not reduced) to system integration in a way that seems difficult to reconcile with the decisive role otherwise ascribed to the former. More importantly, there is an obvious categorical "disproportion" between the *explanandum* the the *explanans*. The *tension* between resources and needs, defined and confronted with each other within the frame of reference given by specific system problems, cannot by itself generate the *contradiction* between the affirmation and the negation of moral progress, between the renewal of structures of interaction and the simultaneous intensification of inequality and domination.

The attempt to disentangle the conceptual schema of the dialectic of progress thereby reveals its limits. For if the pattern of the evolutionary process is bisected into the repetition of an invariable model of systemic correlations and the logical sequence of stages of maturation, an essential aspect of the transition from primitive societies to early civilizations is a priori excluded or minimized. This concerns the radical discontinuity between those societies subjected to two basic mechanisms of domination (i.e., the monopoly of power and accumulation)[37] and those which structurally preclude the emergence of an independent political power or economic process.[38] This rupture is not limited to the domain of social integration. It also affects the structures and processes of production both through the institutionalization of secondary appropriation and a class-based aim of production, and through the subsumption of the general conditions of production under the state. The dialectic of progress, generated by class and state as consubstantial and complementary forms of domination,[39] thus involves the two fundamental dimensions of praxis —

37. The concept of accumulation is used here in the most general sense, i.e., approximately as A. Touraine uses it in *Production de la société* (Paris, 1973).

38. Cf. P. Clastres, *La société contre l'Etat* (Paris, 1974); objectionable as Clastres' interpretation of primitive society is in many respects, his arguments seem convincing as far as the points referred to above are concerned.

39. According to Engels (*The Origin of the Family...*), the development of antagonistic classes precedes that of political domination. The state is "invented" as the appropriate institutional framework for class conflicts (in *Anti-Dühring*, Engels had taken a slightly different view, but this was mostly overlooked by the orthodox tradition). This theory is untenable. The alternative proposed by Habermas reveals some variations of emphasis. In *Legitimation Crisis*, he defines the traditional principle of organization as "class domination in political form," thus stressing the unity of the two aspects. Elsewhere (e.g., *Zur Rekonstruktion.*, p. 275) he tends to

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appropriation and association — as they interlock within a specific historical configuration. This interpenetration tends to disappear from Habermas' model. His conceptualization of the two dimensions both reduces the relations between man and nature to a special case of the general pattern of exchanges between system and environment, and subsumes the relations between men in society to successive and partial approximations to universalistic norms of interaction.

Realizing that the development of capitalism has rendered the traditional model of the proletarian revolution obsolete, critical theory has more or less explicitly and quite justifiably set itself the task of reconceptualizing the emancipatory intentions of classical Marxism. Applied to the Marxian concept of revolution as a transformation of praxis, this project demands both an adequate reconstruction of the original context of meaning and a confrontation with the context of history, i.e., the development of capitalism. Habermas obviously recognizes the necessity of both tasks, but his problematic results in an a priori restrictive definition of their scope. The dichotomy of instrumental and communicative action reduces the possible historical effects of class struggle to auxiliary functions of transmission and acceleration. While subversive of an existing mode of social integration, class struggle can only assist in realizing its further development. As part of the social environment of the productive forces, class struggle can also play a decisive role in paving the way for innovations grounded in the cumulative logic of technical knowledge. Beyond this, the bifurcated structure of action represents a constant and closed pattern, leaving no space for alternatives that could enter into the practical projects of class struggles or social movements.

One final aspect of the Marxian theory of class should be mentioned. As we have seen, Marx identifies the revolutionary transition with a fundamental change in the relationship between labor and free activity. By the attempt to ground the socialist alternative in the functional imperatives of a socialized process of production — typical of objectivist or "automatic" Marxism[40] — represents the first stage in the transition from revolutionary theory to an ideology of bureaucratization. A contemporary reexamination of revolutionary theory cannot rest content with judging the Marxian theory in light of subsequent changes in the social system (e.g., latency of the class struggle, growth of new intermediary strata, displacement of contradictions from the economic to the cultural subsystem, etc.). In addition, an analysis of the constraints and potentialities of the productive forces in contemporary capitalism is necessary.[41] Habermas' reconceptualization of the labor process in effect dissolves this problem. Certainly, one of the targets of his criticism is the traditional Marxist tendency to see emancipation as the conscious control of social development without differentiating between the rationalization of production and rationalization of

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invert the terms of Engels' explanation and see social classes as generated by the state. The first approach seems more promising.

40. Cf. R. Jacoby, "Towards a Critique of Automatic Marxism," in *Telos* no. 10 (1971) and no. 23 (1975).

41. There is, of course, no "Marxist" consensus on this question; it has been answered in widely divergent ways. The pessimistic view that the productive forces have lost their liberatory potential and become instruments of domination was given a classic, if somewhat ambivalent expression by Herbert Marcuse (*One-Dimensional Man*). The "optimistic" variants range from neo-Stalinist (R. Richta, *Civilizace na rozcestí* (*Civilization at the Crossroads*), (Prague, 1967) (English translation New Yori, 1969) to neo-Trotskyist (D. Rouset, *La société éclatée* [Paris, 1973]). For a recent exchange of views, cf. M. Rakovski, "L'union du capital et de la science," and A. Gorz, "Pour une critique des forces productives," both in *Les Temps Modernes*.

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society. "The growth of productive forces is not the same as the intention of the "good life." It can at best serve it."[42] This argument is entirely convincing, but not exhaustive, since the extent to which the expansion of the productive forces can serve the "intention of the good life," i.e., an enterprise of liberation whose objective lies outside the realm of necessity, depends not only on decisions reached through a process of communication but also on the internal structure of the productive forces.

Finally, the problematic differences between Habermas' reconstructed version of historical materialism and its original can be briefly considered from a different angle. Instead of concentrating on individual points of divergence, Habermas' own positive definition of his project as a whole can be discussed and confronted with the much less explicit conceptions of Marx.

As shown above, Habermas has radically revised the traditional concepts of productive forces and relations of production and the corresponding developmental models. His innovation consists primarily in the introduction of cognitive determinants at all levels. Since the latter are ultimately defined with reference to world-views and structures of consciousness, the revision obviously affects another aspect of the traditional doctrine: *the relations between base and superstructure become an integral part of the dialectic of productive forces and relations of production.*[43] The two previously separated dimensions of analysis are merged in a more complex, three-dimensional model of evolutionary interconnections and processes. It comprises the following elements:[44] (a) the system problems of material production and reproduction, generating the crises that lead to new forms of social integration; (b) the developmental logic of social integration or, to quote a more provocative formulation, "the internal history of the mind;"[45] and (c) the "contingent circumstances...under which 1) new structures are acquired by the individual consciousness and translated into structures of world-views; under which 2) system problems arise and overtax the steering capacity of a society; under which 3) the institutional incarnation of new structures of rationality can be tested and stabilized, and under which 4) the wider scope for the utilization of resources can be utilized."[46]

The materialistic aspect of the theory comprises the first point; consequently, it is identified with system analysis in a broad sense. The third point obviously falls within the scope of historical analysis. The second represents a different kind of historicity, one which is accessible to methods of rational reconstruction and explainable in terms of a theory of evolution. On the basis of these premises, Habermas formulates his most fundamental criticism of Marx. The latter is accused of conflating — or at least

42. J. Habermas, *Towards a Rational Society* (London, 1971), p. 119.

43. Habermas' interpretation of Marx on this point (cf. *Zur Rekonstruktion...*, p. 157ff.) seems questionable. On the one hand, he ranks the "superstructure theorem" with the dialectic of productive forces and the relations of production as a fundamental tenet of historical materialism; this may apply to the post-Marxian systematization, particularly its Soviet version, but in Marx's own works the two theorems represent different degrees of conceptualization: "productive forces" and "relations of production" are basic concepts and indispensable starting-points for further elaboration, whereas "base" and "superstructure" are provisional and metaphorical indicators of a problematic not yet fully thematized. On the other hand, Habermas accepts Kautsky's interpretation of Marx's 1859 *Preface*, and restricts the validity of the "superstructure theorem" to the explanation of evolutionary innovations. The text, however, refers to structural as well as evolutionary correlations, and the metaphor of the "superstructure" is used for both.

44. Cf. J. Habermas, *Zur Rekonstruktion...*, p. 37ff.

45. *Ibid.*, p. 38.

46. *Ibid.*, p. 37-38.

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insufficiently distinguishing — the two processes of rationalization which are constitutive of socio-cultural evolution: the rationalization of the productive forces and the rationalization of normative structures. This confusion can only be eliminated through a more precise conceptualization: "...holistic concepts, such as productive activity and praxis, must be analyzed into the basic concepts of communicative and purposive-rational action."[47] If the process of rationalization reflect this differential structure of action, it remains to be shown how they can be subsumed under a common category. Rationalization could be defined as the progressive explication and implementation of inherent principles; specific forms of action or cognition can only be rationalized along the lines prefigured by their specific principles. In the case of purposive-rational action, rationalization involves the perfection and selection of means. Its most important manifestation is the technical application of knowledge, i.e., the development of the productive forces. The rationalization of communicative action concerns the "accountability of the subject of action and the justifiability of the norm of action;"[48] it is identical with the overcoming of systemic barriers to communication. Beyond both types of rationalization are the corresponding learning processes that constitute the "internal history of the mind." This complex and controverisal notion obviously requires a more extensive analysis than can be attempted here. I will conclude with only a few observations.

According to Habermas, the learning processes of the human species take place through the accumulation of both technical and moral-practical knowledge. Both forms obey a "logic of growing insight," whose successive stages consist in rules of possible problem solutions.[49] The concept of a developmental logic is not to be confused with the concrete dynamics of development, for the logic of the learning processes is sharply distinguished from their empirical manifestations. This distinction enables Habermas to demarcate his model from traditional theories of evolution. He sees socio-cultural evolution as the realization of an ordered sequence of structural possibilities (determinable only *ex post facto*), and not as an irreversible, causal process governed by natural laws. Furthermore, the two fundamental learning processes are both subsumed under a common denominator and combined in a synthetic structure, the principle of organization. This category represents Habermas' attempt to solve some of the problems raised by the traditional concept of the mode of production. A principle of organization is situated at a higher level of abstraction than a mode of production. With regard to both the productive forces and social integration, this principle determines the overall level of learning processes possible in a given social formation.

The two components of a principle of organization are neither equally problematical nor equally important in Habermas' perspective. Indeed, the putative learning process manifested in the progress of social integration is both more difficult to reconcile with the model of a cumulative growth of knowledge and more decisive in its impact on social systems, since its institutional embodiment necessarily precedes and sustains the expansion of the productive forces. Habermas' own emphasis is therefore predominantly devoted to the moral-practical aspect of the "internal history

47. *Ibid.*, p. 31. It should be noted that Habermas in his more recent writings increasingly prefers the general concept of purposive — rational action, including instrumental and strategic action. For our present purposes, however, the original concept of instrumental action is more important, because of its role as a substitute for the Marxian concept of labor.
48. *Ibid.*, p. 34.
49. *Ibid.*, p. 36.

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of the mind."

For this purpose, he turns to cognitive psychology, whose results are seen as substantiating the concept of a developmental logic. While the adequacy of the psychological evidence cannot be discussed here,[50] it is obvious that highly speculative extrapolations of psychological discoveries would only be justified insofar as they are presented as hypotheses, to be confronted with historical realities. The plausibility of this approach also rests on certain *prima facie* characteristics of learning processes, such as the interpenetration of individual and society, and the complementarity of psychological and sociological analysis. Strictly speaking, only individuals learn, and the results of their learning processes constitute a social resource.[51] Habermas goes further, by adding the hypothesis that individual learning processes tend to surpass the limits of institutionalized knowledge, thus producing a cognitive surplus that is deposited in world-views and disposable for evolutionary changes in the structures of interaction. In this sense, he assumes a certain primacy of the individual over society, and hence a priority of the relationship between man and world (i.e., the systematic interpretations of the world) compared with that between man and society.

This primacy is conceived through basic concepts of a "genetic theory of action," derived from the conjunction of developmental psychology and Habermas' preliminary sketches of a theory of communicative competence. This genetic theory of action centers on two principles of differentiation: the levels of communication and the stages of moral consciousness. According to the first prespective, levels of communicative competence can be differentiated. First, there is the elementary level of symbolic interaction, lacking a clear differentiation between speech and action; secondly, the level of "propositionally differentiated speech," which implies a distinction between action and speech that makes possible the separation of actions and norms; finally, the level of argumentative speech (synonymous with the "ability to pass from action to discourse"), whereby norms are separated from universal principles, on the basis of which they can be justified or criticized. Three corresponding stages of moral consciousness are cited: the pre-conventional, which precedes any differentiation between actions, norms, and subjects, and evaluates actions only in the light of their consequences; the conventional stress upon the conformity of actions with a given social role or an established system of norms; and the post-conventional, which marks the transition to a universalistic questioning and evaluation of norms. Further, there is a parallel drawn between ego development and socio-cultural evolution which singles out moral and legal structures as most accessible to a systematic comparison.[52] The latter constitute the central zone (*Kernbereich*; to be distinguished from the institutional core) of interaction. On this basis, Habermas distinguishes four stages of socio-cultural evolution: neolithic societies, early civilizations, developed civilizations, and modern societies.[53] Thus, the raising of the means of regulating conflicts to the conventional level is identified with the transition from neolithic societies to early civilizations, and the formation of the state. The definitive breakthrough to the generation of universalistic structures coincides with the

50. For the most detailed exposition, cf. J. Habermas, "Moral Development and Ego Identity," *Telos* no. 24 (1975), p. 41-55.

51. J. Habermas, *Zur Rekonstruktion...*, p. 169-70.

52. There are, of course, other possibilities. Habermas briefly discusses two of them: the analogies between world-views and the system of demarcations of the ego, and between the structures of ego identity and collective identity (*Zur Rekonstruktion...*, p. 16-30).

53. Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 172-73.

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rationalized world-views which form the most distinctive characteristic of developed civilizations. Since these world-views already contain universalistic notions of moral and law, they set the course for further developments. The specifically modern institutionalizations of universalistic principles have their ultimate origins in pre-modern cultural traditions.[54] In a certain sense, the "internal history of the mind" seems to end with the classical interpretations of the world (Greece, China, India, Palestine): the rest is a "post-history."

However controversial the idea of an "internal history of the mind" appears, the importance of the question it raises cannot be denied. With this notion, Habermas has conceptualized in a more radical and ambitious way the problem that others have tackled in terms of a "relative autonomy of the superstructures." In both cases, the attempted demarcation of historical materialism from economic determinism is motivated by the insight that the determinants of material production and reproduction are neither exhaustive nor self-sufficient. In yet another perspective (Castoriadis), the relationship between production and interpretation (i.e., the complexes of significations that determine the identity of a society as well as its relations with the world) is seen as being irreducible to the constraints of social production, however flexibly conceived. Approaching the "internal history of the mind" from this point of view, Habermas' conception clearly implies a double closure which is prefigured by his revision of the concept of labor. Although the traditional version of unilinear evolutionism, which confuses the logic of development with its empirical dynamics, is unequivocally rejected, the freshly conceived developmental logic is closed to alternatives as well as to interference from the material context. If the labor process is reduced to instrumental action and the actual and potential experience of nature confined within the limits determined by this structure, the cumulative development of technical knowledge is the only possible modification of the relationship between man and nature. And if this dimension of praxis follows the logic of its own closed structure, *social* evolution (which only appears in the role of external obstacle or stimulus) in turn can only be conceived as the materialization of an analogous, equally closed logic. While some implications of the concept of the relations of production have already been traced, the world-views and their evolution must be set against this background. Although Habermas tends to present the notion of a developmental logic behind the change of interpretations as a hypothesis, its plausibility is obviously derived from his philosophical presuppositions. In fact, it represents an evolutionist extension of the thesis defended in *Knowledge and Human Interests*: the differential constitution of domains of objectivity, corresponding to instrumental and communicative action, expresses itself in learning processes that lead to the progressive separation fo the two domains. The evolution of world-views thus logically culminates in the total objectification of nature and the tendential subjectivization of society. The "internal history of the mind" is devoid of creativity. It is restricted to the clarification and rationalization of its original context, i.e., the natural and social correlates of action.

If, on the contrary, the labor process is integrated into a pluridimensional and open-textured appropriation of nature (cf. the above references to Marx), the analysis

54. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 24-42, where Habermas argues against Benjamin Nelson that there is nothing unique about the universalistic potential of the Occidental tradition. The same structures of consciousness all seem to have emerged within other traditions, and the unique role they came to play in European history is due to specific conditions and conjunctures.

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of world-views and their transformations must correspondingly redefine its problematic. World-views now appear as specific articulations of the network of relations between man and nature, rather than as successive approximations to a final state predetermined by the logic of instrumental action. Conversely, if the major historical transformations of the productive forces modify both the structure of the labor process and its place within the context of praxis, the interpretive systems face new constellations, not simply further extensions of a constant and self-contained pattern.

Johann P. Arnason

Enrique M. Urena. *La Teoria Critica de la Sociedad de Habermas: La Crisis de la Sociedad Industrializada.* Madrid: Tecnos, 1978. 144 pages.

Victor Pérez-Diaz. *Estado, Bureaucracia y Sociedad Civil. Discusion Critica, Desarrollos y Alternativas a la Teoria Politica de Karl Marx.* Madrid: Alfaguara, 1978. 154 pages.

Published even before Tom McCarthy's *The Critical Theory of Jürgen Habermas*, Urena's book was the first monograph seeking to systematize Habermas' thought much more extensively than has been done before in articles by people such as Therborn, Shapiro, and even Muguerza in Spain. But Urena's text is worth reading for other reasons as well. He locates Habermas' production in a historical and theoretical sequence in which he appears as one of the culminations. In the introductory chapters, the author outlines critical theory's reading of Hegel, Marx and Freud, as well as the core arguments of "senior" critical theorists such as Horkheimer, Adorno and Marcuse. This part clearly explains complex ideas such as Hegel's withdrawal from the negative potentials of his methodology to a "safe" transhistorical ontology; Marx's productivist bias; Freud's bio-energetic reduction of psychoanalysis' communicative component; and Horkheimer's, Adorno's and Marcuse's critiques of instrumental reason, identity theory and one-dimensionality. This allows Urena to analyze the main features of Habermas' theory: his critique of science and technology as ideology in advanced industrial society, as well as the epistemological foundation of social science and the perspective of human interest culminating in a final emancipatory one. Unfortunately, Urena fails to elaborate his analysis and critique of Habermas' most recent developments (i.e., his communication theory, his notions of universal pragmatics, communicative competence and legitimation crisis), on the ground that the complexity of the subject does not allow him to write as much as would be required. This is not convincing, especially since it appears that the author has already mastered the subject matter. (Urena, in fact, received his Ph.D. in Frankfurt with a dissertation on "Kritische Theorie und Religionsphilosophie. Eine Auseinandersetzung mit J. Habermas." Furthermore, he has already published two other books, one on Marx's economics and another on Freud's social theory, and has announced a new one on Kant's social theory.)

The author does, however, discuss Habermas' tentative steps in the building of a new moral consciousness based on interaction and the legitimation crisis of advanced capitalism. Urena seems to feel pre-empted by Habermas' long-range conclusions, and

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thus chooses simply to mention them without any further elaboration. Hence, Habermas' relation not only to Marxism and critical theory but also to symbolic interactionism is discussed in a footnote, and Habermas' reception of systems theory as well as his polemics with Luhmann are discussed in just five short pages.

Similarly, the author waits too long — until the end of the book — to introduce criticism. After praising Habermas' personalization of a new research outlook, which abandons the "master" aura (à la Adorno or Marcuse) to work with a team and to adopt a cooperative attitude, Urena points out the partiality of concentrating only on advanced capitalism when treating the crisis of legitimation. Furthermore, Habermas does not take into account crucial problems such as the energy crisis, the division of the world into two blocks and the emerging "trans-ideological collaboration." As evidence for this, Urena cites works by Lewin, Brus, Kosta and Meyer, Wilczynski, Nove, Gamble and Walton, and Shonfield — without, however, outlining the specific arguments. Thus Urena shies away from a potentially major contribution.

The second criticism deals with Habermas' alleged confusion of religion and ethics. Urena points out that Habermas' projection that religion as a symbolic order will progressively give way to a moral order based on interpersonal communications anticipating the perfect speech situation through the very propositional-linguistic structure, forgets the distinction that modern religious thought establishes between religion as a true Utopian dimension and perverted forms of religious historical practices. Yet, from the viewpoint of modern theology, Urena argues that Habermas' emancipatory program could not fulfill by itself humanity's profound Utopian needs. Again this is an important point deserving considerably more elaboration than Urena provides in the book.

Whereas Urena pointed out the absence in Habermas' thought of an adequate discussion of important contemporary problems, Pérez-Diaz does the same but in another context: an interpretation of Marx's political theory and methodology in terms of their possible applications to the study of present structural contradictions in the capitalist state, the crisis of legitimation in advanced capitalism and the prospects of Eastern European societies.

Similarly, while Urena immediately betrayed the fact that he wrote from a German perspective, Pérez-Diaz's over-Anglicized language testifies to his American education. (He received a Ph.D. in sociology at Harvard after receiving one at the University of Madrid. He also worked at the Princeton Institute for Advanced Study and in Paris at the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes.)

Pérez-Diaz does not want to deal with Marxism understood as a "holy discourse." He rather wants simply to learn from Marx's theoretical and methodological contributions. Thus, he writes: "to try to build Marx's theory ... is a theoretical misunderstanding ... [which] assumes a non-existent degree of inner coherence within Marx's work.... Marx did not develop his program. He *almost* finished a theory of economics within the capitalist mode of production.... In most cases, he transmitted to us very stimulating fragments, drafts and tentative explanations, along with some powerful and brilliant generalizations too strong to be accepted without discussion and too ambiguous when discussed carefully. That is all" (pp. 20, 61). This is not bad as a starting point, since so often Marxist literature adopts a reverential tone inappropriate for an incomplete and still fluid body of thought. More concretely, the author polemicizes against Althusser and Poulantzas and their pseudo-critical jargon by developing a structural, though not *structuralist*, reading of Marx. It is well known how that jargon finally "flew over the cuckoo's nest." Yet, primarily in Europe where

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its influence was greatest, it is important to establish the real limits of what was essentially a theoretical fashion.

But the polemic with Althusser and Poulantzas is only one of the objectives of Pérez-Diaz's book. Its central goal is to infer from Marx's works an analytical model based on the contradictory tension between state and civil society in terms of the economic, political and cultural systems that shape any social formation. For Pérez-Diaz, the state must be broadly understood as the ensemble of forces forming the *establishment* and appropriating the economic, political or cultural resources flowing from civil society. Thus, Pérez-Diaz develops a model of unequal exchange that introduces a tension between an exploitative elite called the state and the rest of the citizens. In other words, there is in class society "a conflict within the (broader) conflict." According to Pérez-Diaz, that is, Marx's value today lies in the analytical tools latent in his work rather than in any various "historical missions," "determinations" and "overdeterminations." The author further argues that there are many factors influencing social change and there is no reason to give any primacy to economic development.

This is not presented as speculation, but it is deduced from a close study of Marx's empirical analyses of Napoleon III's rise to power and *Capital's* account of the functioning of the liberal British state of the mid-19th century. These are the most interesting sections of the book. Pérez-Diaz reconstructs the periods of Bonapartism in France and liberalism in England, thus providing a solid picture that allows him to criticize Marx's accounts of both periods. He shows how the bourgeoisie can maintain a liberal-democratic state *or* a bureaucratic-authoritarian one (against Marx, who argued that the 18th Brumaire was a bourgeois withdrawal); and how bureaucrats and politicians can introduce reforms *before* land and factory owners think it advisable (again, against Marx, who admitted modifications of capitalism only as a result of the system's functional needs). The author focuses especially on Marx's wrong interpretation of the French peasants' 1848 political behavior as only very superficially alienated while it can be demonstrated that the new Bonapartist situation benefitted the peasants against the threat of industrial transformation revealed by the workers' movement. Yet, Pérez-Diaz emphasizes that the methodology allowing the articulation of autonomous levels and subsystems within a mode of production and the parallel and interconnected contradiction between state and civil society is in Marx's work, *malgré lui*. If Marx forced the conclusions of his analysis in a direction toward which they do not necessarily flow, the reasons are to be sought in his adherence to an evolutionary ontology popular at the time — a bias that would later lead Althusser to postulate his notion of "overdetermination." This inevitably leads to the question of the continuity between Hegel and Marx. The author rejects both the theses of absolute continuity and epistemological break. He claims that the older Marx simply shifted his attention away from Hegel's political theory. What is this theory? Here Pérez-Diaz offers an original analysis of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* and of *The Phenomenology of Mind* as theoretical constructions of a model of political modernization resulting in a pre-Weberian praise of neutral bureaucrats realizing universal interests and not, as it is usually suggested, in a vulgar metaphysics of history. Later, Marx refined this Hegelian method by changing the modernizing agency from the bureaucracy to the proletariat and abandoning Hegel's notion of the state as an ethical, ideal community. But despite their analytic powers, both Hegel and Marx retained their faith in *real human history*. This is why Marx never enters fully into the political and sociological analyses required by his economic theory. According to Pérez-Diaz, Marx was simply "afraid" of his own method. His political and sociological withdrawal (exemplified by

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the dramatic interruption of *Capital*) constitutes a *lapsus* in the Freudian sense.

Pérez-Diaz combines a structural approach with a cultural sensibility that allows him to examine the full range of what results in the reproduction of social life through everyday history. As he himself put it, he is interested not only in the characters of the social drama (à la Althusser), but also in "performances." What research strategy can combine both features satisfactorily? Following present trends emphasizing the centrality of culture, the author emphasizes the legitimation crisis in advanced capitalism due to difficulties in achieving mass loyalty and to reconcile growing monopolization with the required mobilization of resources from "civil society." Here Pérez-Diaz relies on O'Connor. His conclusions and topics tend to parallel Habermas' and Offe's legitimation crisis and Piccone's "artificial negativity."

The author closes suggesting that Marx's latent critique of the states as "exploitative space" should stimulate critics to examine Eastern European societies where there is an irreparable divorce between the Party's bureaucracy and the people.

Pérez-Diaz promises to return to these topics and, as in Urena's case, to attempt further to bridge the gap between the "structural" and the "cultural" dimensions. Needless to say, a lot more remains to be done in these areas. Thus, any new work along these lines must be welcome. Pérez-Diaz and Urena have provided solid contributions. Yet the search for a "new critical paradigm" is not over. Of course, probably the best way to meet this challenge would be by means of greater collaboration among various cultural areas, thus gradually breaking down the barriers separating the various disciplines.

José E. Rodriguez-Ibanez

Gerson S. Sher. *Praxis: Marxist Criticism and Dissent in Socialist Yugoslavia.* Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1977.

Z. Erard and G.M. Zygier, eds. *La Pologne: Une Société en Dissidence.* Paris: Maspero, 1978.

The course of dissent in the East European socialist states is so marked by constraints and failures that discussion of these regimes invokes metaphors of captivity, alienation, and total powerlessness, even among those of their inhabitants who have been most anxious for political and social change. In such conditions, private sorrows and small satisfactions replace public consciousness, and solidarity is limited to those who share intimate situations. Each level of social existence indicates a dependency so absolute, so disintegrative, so demoralizing as "to make the everyday life of the working population a veritable hell."[1]

Individuals are intimidated from engaging in any collective, contentious form of social action; peasants are limited in their land tenure and farm management by decisions that are made at a distant government center; workers' ability to change jobs or to protest job conditions is controlled by a local group of political appointees as well as by government policy; administrative and managerial personnel in both economic and political organizations hold their positions on the basis of the political clientelism

1. Leszek Kolakowski, "Thèses sur l'espoir et la désespoir," in *La Pologne: une société en dissidence*, ed. Z. Erard and G.M. Zygier (Paris, 1978), p. 84.

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and conformity that shape the *nomenklatura* or civil service list; the leaders of the state and party exercise power which relies on surveillance by the secret police, but the leaders, themselves, are always under surveillance; and each East European country as a whole has been subject for more than 30 years to the armed might and armed intervention of the Soviet Union. This hierarchy of powerlessness illustrates both the ordinary and the extraordinary aspects of social life in Eastern Europe. On the one hand, in even the most ordinary situations, neither ultimate powerlessness nor relative privilege can be defined without reference to brute power. On the other hand, in those extraordinary situations when complaints from various sources and grievances in diverse milieux compel tactical alliances between people on different levels of powerlessness, a dynamic opposition explodes the premises of the whole system. At such times — 1956 in Hungary and Poland, 1968 in Czechoslovakia — power is transcended so that the state's repressive apparatus is eliminated, and state action becomes a sphere and a symbol of freedom.

In this sense of transforming state power, the brief uprisings that have shaken Eastern Europe since the death of Stalin have been revolutions. Although they have been suppressed too quickly to have transformed the existing regimes, they have all articulated a radical reversal of the political and moral premises upon which these regimes are based. Despite differences from country to country, the East European revolutionary experiences have generally established a consensus on the basis of national and national-ethnic autonomy, popular participation through councils, the popularity of political leaders and political organizations that represent the aspirations of their constituents, cooperation and trust that bridge social classes and functional roles, pluralism of expression for political factions and interest groups, and a rationale of state planning that promises pragmatism, productivity and consumers' goods. Whether such principles could have co-existed for a longer time than Soviet state power permitted is debatable. The ideological legacy from the 1910-1920 period (particularly national autonomy and councils) and the pluralism of interest groups might have foundered against an implacable, elitist, economic rationality. The principle of national autonomy could also have been obstructive. On the one hand, it could dissipate collective gains into narrow regional interests; on the other hand, it might degenerate into the kind of xenophobic, anti-Semitic, national chauvinism which frequently emerges in Eastern Europe. The political leaders who respond to real popular desires may lose their nerve (as Imre Nagy apparently refused to fight the Soviet attack in 1956) or make promises that they will not keep (as Wladislaw Gomulka did, also in 1956). But it is more interesting to consider that the common elements of East European revolutionary experiences represent what many people would do if they were free. They would democratize and rationalize a socialist state.

This new socialism would renounce the dictatorship of the proletariat or of any other revolutionary subject. It would be responsive to economic trends and popular pressures, it would be efficient; it would be open to new ideas and criticism. In the 1960s, East European reformers sometimes used the "cybernetic" model to represent the kind of political system that they wanted, but the dissidents of the 1970s seem more humanistic or perhaps merely disabused by the technicist notions of reconstructing politics that have created conditions neither of greater abundance nor greater liberty. "The foundation of socialism," writes Edward Lipinski in an "Open Letter to Comrade Edward Gierek," "is liberty, decentralization, the responsibility of all citizens in making decisions concerning the economy and the politics of the society." For Leszek Kolakowski, socialism is "a national system of sovereignty which implies the

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society's control over the use and development of the means of production and over the distribution of national income, as well as over the administrative and political apparatus which work as an organ of the society, not as a master harnessing society 'to his service'; ... an organism which supposes freedom of information and communication, political pluralism and the pluralism of forms of social property; respect for the notions of truth, efficiency, public interest, for freedom of professional association, for the end of the arbitrariness exercised by the political police and for a penal legislation whose objective will be defending society against anti-social behavior, not transforming all citizens into delinquents who are subject to blackmail."[2]

While such definitions owe a good deal to pre-1917 discussions of Social Democracy as well as to 17th- and 18th-century notions of sovereignty and citizenship, they are also influenced by the experience — or, as some people call it, the experiment — of Yugoslavia. Particularly in the East European context of dependency, uneven levels of economic development, and national fragmentation, Yugoslavia has provided a sense of the democratization and the rationalization which are realistically possible within the boundaries of a socialist state. The Yugoslavs have dispensed with state planning and the centralized tax structure that supports such a system; they have decentralized both state and party administration; they make enterprise-by-enterprise decisions on the basis of self-management by economic units; they have both extensive production of consumer goods and modified market pricing; and they have open borders for the two-way passage of people and information. Yet all the Yugoslav innovations have been initiated by the single political party, the League of Communists (LCY), which centralizes in its hands effective command and coordination of the country as a whole. When the authority of that party has been threatened, its leaders at the very top level have reacted firmly by chastising, threatening, pressuring, and removing from their positions any lower-level leaders (particularly in the decentralized republican state and LCY organizations) or cultural spokesmen (particularly teachers and writers) who question the need for a single, authoritative center.

To a significant degree, the LCY's authoritarianism is inseparable from the authority of President Tito and the authenticity of the Yugoslav revolutionary experience of the 1940s. All three characteristics derive from the total discrediting of all possible alternative leaders, political organizations, and operational principles of state-management after World War II. Unlike Poland, neither national church (the Roman Catholic Church in Croatia and the Orthodox Church in Serbia) could represent universal values which were untainted by collaboration with the fascists. Unlike Czechoslovakia, there was no popular tradition of Social Democracy, with its own party, leader, and mass base in the trade unions. Although leaders on all levels who were associated with a pro-Soviet policy (and Soviet infiltration) were purged after the break with the Cominform (1947-49), Yugoslavia did not conjure up the ritual concatenation of surveillance and confession based on faith that typified purge trials in the Soviet Union, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia. Indeed, in contrast to the other ruling communist parties, the LCY affirmed its authority by its very pragmatic demonstration of national autonomy vis-à-vis Stalin.

Moreover, the party made significant changes in the Soviet model of a socialist regime. Yugoslav leaders seem never to have been irrevocably committed to forced collectivization of agriculture, and they were willing to experiment with workers' councils in a hybrid form of industrial management. At least this has been true at the

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 169, 94.

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highest levels of Yugoslav political leadership. Lower-level cadres no doubt obstructed such deviations from the "firm hand" of the Soviet model, but the very top leaders deprived them of the policy, the personnel, and the equipment which would have enabled them to maintain collective farms and state-run industrial hierarchies. Such changes did not arise in the protests of workers or peasants, or even professional intellectuals, but in strategy discussions among the top few leaders. Later, in the 1950s and 1960s, the steps that were taken toward reducing the overt controls that the party exercised (e.g., changing its name from party to league, rejecting a "ruling" role in favor of ideological and moral "guidance," generating more discussion within party ranks) were not responses to pressure but gestures of self-confidence in which the LCY was dealing from strength.[3]

Thus Yugoslavia has not experienced mass uprisings like the Polish and Hungarian revolutions of 1956, decimations of the top political leadership like Czechoslovakia after 1965, or protests that spread from local work stoppages to strikes which shut down major industrial centers as in Poland in 1970-71 and 1976. The Yugoslav leaders have maintained their "liberalizing" initiative by means of several general strategies, which may seem so haphazard as not to comprise a policy, certainly not in the sense of the repression utilized by the other East European regimes. The Yugoslav strategies for dealing with potential opposition include (1) pre-emptive intervention in local disputes, when top-level leaders uphold workers' grievances (or when Tito adopted the 1968 student strike denunciations as his own) and punish political officials and enterprise managers; (2) co-optation, by encouraging the production of a wide variety of consumer goods and assuring their distribution through a lax tax inspection system that permits people to make, keep, and spend extra-job income; and, perhaps most important of all, (3) the constant reorganization of self-management institutions into units of consensus which are functionally wide and territorially narrow — making it difficult for any particular social group to establish a base for articulating their grievances. Nevertheless, the LCY has been vulnerable to criticism from within the party itself when such critics claim a moral authority that rivals the party's, and can identify themselves with the party's own official ideology. Only two sources have engendered this sort of criticism: those that ally themselves with the interests of particular ethnic nationalities and those that express the ideals of the classical Marxist texts (i.e., those of Marx himself rather than Lenin, Stalin, etc.). These two sources of criticism have the potential for developing into widely based social movements that both build upon the official Yugoslav ideology (notably, decentralization and self-management) and threaten the institutional structure of the Yugoslav state. To some degree, both sources have demonstrated a group identity: the first, through the political leaders who, until their dismissal in 1971-72, directed republican administrations and represented republican interests, and the second, through the social philosophers who published primarily in the journal *Praxis* from 1964 to 1975, and who represented more universalistic interests.

Neither of these groups were revisionists or reformers in the sense of the other East Europeans who hoped, between 1956 and 1968, to advance social change by altering the bases of party rule. Nor did they ignite a permanent social movement with their words or deeds. (In any event, the nationalist leaders had much more of a constituency

3. John B. Allcock, "The Socialist Transformation of the Village: Yugoslav Agricultural Policy since 1945," unpublished manuscript; Dennison Rusinow, *The Yugoslav Experiment 1948-1974* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1977).

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than the *Praxis* group.) Yet each of them utilized party support to maintain their visibility, their lines of communication, and their credibility. Significantly, as each group was gradually excluded from the party (one by one, in the *Praxis* group's case, and republic by republic for the LCY leaders), it lost its lifeline: outside the party, neither group appeared able or willing to mobilize a mass base of support.

The fact that both sources of criticism grew in response to the liberalization program of the mid-1960s reflects a circumstance of structure rather than a coincidence of interests. Indeed, there was no love lost between the two groups. The *Praxis* philosophers consistently and profusely criticized nationalist tendencies on the party of local leaders. They viewed such tendencies as posing a threat to the collective goals and mutual welfare of all the Yugoslav regions, and as advancing an ideological justification for new class divisions between "haves" and "have-nots."[4] For their part, the republican ideologues of the new nationalism continually criticized the elitist presumptions of intellectuals who dared to denounce the errors of practicing politicians — and who did so, moreover, from a moral stance that claimed to be both outside and above common politics in the realm of pure philosophy. While the social functions of critique as well as the explicit content of many *Praxis* contributions indicate a high degree of political involvement, members of the *Praxis* group frequently asserted (e.g., Sher) that the role of the philosopher in general and their journal in particular was not political.

Needless to say, the mutual criticism of these groups exposed the contradictions inherent in their political positions. The nationalism of the republican leaders evoked the fear of separatism that could (and did) hasten their own political demise, and the political critique of the philosophers who claimed to be apolitical led to their being curtailed in a political manner. Despite differences in the size of their potential constituencies (far more Yugoslavs participated in or were affected by the nationalist student strikes of 1971 than the "New Left" student strike of 1968) and differences in the target of their criticism (centralization for the republican leaders; localism, bureaucratism, inequality, consumerism and cultural repression for the *Praxis* philosophers), both groups had the same logical implications. That is, by positing in their own way radical routes to the LCY's own stated goals of decentralization and self-management, the republican leaders and the *Praxis* philosophers upset the party's key role as the organizational fulcrum of traditional state power and all untraditional alternatives. The Yugoslav "experiment" with socialist self-management that the party had held together through many tenuous days was shown to be incomplete, flawed, or even, at worst, a sham. If the party derived moral authority from defending this experiment, then its legitimacy was eroded.

In contrast to Yugoslavia, the socialist regime of Poland derived no moral authority from either its origin or its mode of operation during the early, Stalinist years. Thus there was no question of unmasking a sham: the duplicity and the opportunism of party rule were all too apparent. Nevertheless, the tentative steps toward de-Stalinization taken between 1953 and 1956 created a possible moral premise for legitimizing, finally, a Polish socialist system. As in Yugoslavia, expectations arose that the party would become more democratic and the economy more rational. Unlike Yugoslavia, these expectations gave rise to mass movements that held the Polish leaders accountable for their promises. In 1956 and again in 1968, Poles took to the streets in

4. Gerson S. Sher, *Praxis: Marxist Criticism and Dissent in Socialist Yugoslavia* (Bloomington, Ind., 1977), pp. 177ff.

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a push for the moral regenesis of the socialist regime. Just as 1956 signalled the great hope that such reform was possible, so 1968 represented the great despair that it was not. During that 12-year period, reformers within the Polish United Workers' Party (PUWP) had gradually been excluded from its ranks; promises had not been kept; the Marxist ideals that still animated many intellectuals, students, and activist workers had been inalterably dissociated from party rule. In "A Letter to Friends," published in Polish in Paris in 1976, a participant in the student demonstrations of 1968 speaks of her contemporaries as "we, the last generation of Polish revisionism." As Marxists, in the 1960s, that generation tried to recall the party to its "sources" in the socialism described by Marx: "notions such as liberty, the abundance of bread, equality, and freedom of expression." After the debacle of 1968 — arrests of students, circulation of anti-intellectual and anti-Semitic propaganda — their hope for the party's reform died.[5]

While the PUWP failed to create a moral authority from its ideological sources, the Polish church and the non-communist Polish intellectuals usurped the classical Marxist prerogative of speaking for popular aspirations and widely held social values. For the author of "A Letter to Friends," this presented "the paradox of a situation where the values that were vainly sought in the Left were found at the antipodes; the fact, too, that if in our vision of the world we had granted the human being his sovereignty in the face of the objective laws of history, it was high time we tried to take a new look at the corner where that sovereignty had always been defended."[6] In reality, the Polish Catholic Church had not always been noted for its social activism and, in contrast to other churches, it is markedly conservative in its social policies. Nonetheless, the Polish clergy and the Polish laity had evolved since 1956 toward increased political involvement in the affairs of a socialist state. In the process of this evolution, the church did not cede its demand for autonomy from the state, but it did shed the sense of aloofness from real social problems that its previous opposition had created. The lay Catholic intellectuals, associated most notably with the Znak movement (named after the monthly journal *Znak*) followed a similar pattern. By entering the national legislature as an independent bloc after 1956, these Catholics and their associates in the liberal Catholic press were able to speak out on issues of public concern within — though not constrained by — the discourse of state power. Their writings, according to Polish dissident historian Adam Michnik, made it possible for young Poles "to have at least a foretaste of political pluralism."[7] Although the Znak movement, in Michnik's view, became too compromised by the support that its political participation lent the Gomulka regime, the church hierarchy became less compromised by its prior rigidity. The bishops' "jeremiads against the impious gave way to a call for the principles of human rights."[8] The majority of the Polish population which identifies itself with the church could not fail to be impressed.

Despite their different organizational and ideological roots, Polish Marxists (revisionists from the 1960s and their successors) and Polish Catholics (clergy as well as laity) moved toward a common platform by the beginning of the 1970s. Their cohesion was founded on two premises: first, that the country was divided between those who supported and those who opposed totalitarian power, and second, that the

5. Ann Chmielewska (pseudonym), "Lettre aux amis," in *Pologne, op.cit.*, pp. 174-178; Adam Michnik, "Une stratégie pour l'opposition polonaise," in *Pologne*, pp. 101-103, 105.
6. Chmielewska, *ibid.*, p. 193.
7. *Pologne*, pp. 103-104.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 109. See also "Textes de l'épiscopat," pp. 67-75.

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country should be democratic and free. While the oppositional quality of these assertions was unmistakable, they permitted a wide latitude of interpretation in terms of both means and ends. This step toward a common cause was particularly significant in Poland because, unlike Yugoslavia, so many social groups opposed Marxism and resented the various indignities (national and individual, cultural and political) that had been imposed under a Marxist aegis. However, the common premises of the opposition did not abjure Marxism. Thus it became possible to unite Marxists who still sought a democratic, rational socialism with a pro-human rights clergy and a liberal Catholic intelligentsia, and an allegedly "apolitical" right-wing of Polish nationalists and Polish pluralists.

This expansion into a coalition politics influenced two fundamental changes in the strategy which had previously been pursued by each isolated opinion group. Previously, each group had addressed itself exclusively to its own presumed constituency and to the political leadership. Thus each group had been engaged in a sporadic series of bilateral negotiations with the party and-or the state. If these maneuvers included forced resistance to the state's demands, which could lead to either repression or compromise, then no other group shared the costs or the benefits. This mode of operation imposed a strategy of, first, severely restricted dialogue and, second, inescapable escalation toward forceful protest, in the mistaken belief that any single group could light the spark which would burn down the whole system. With the demise of Polish revisionism as a separate political movement in 1968, this strategy was finally proved dysfunctional. In its place, during the next few years, the coalition of opposition movements adopted a strategy of addressing itself to the population at large, instead of to the power-holders, and working on the basis of small acts, rather than large blows, of resistance. For this strategy to mobilize the population, opposition leaders had to convince people that the Polish political system, though static and "totalitarian," was nonetheless susceptible to "partial and progressively efficacious pressures, exercised in a perspective of long duration."[9]

For intellectuals in the East European countries around this time, such pressures found a salient organizing principle in the problem of human rights. Not only did human rights provide a broad enough context for the unity of diverse opposition ideologies, but the issue also reflected two fundamental problems with which all socialist states were vitally concerned. First, they had to counter the blow to their legitimacy, their image, and their confidence that had been inflicted by the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia and the resulting destruction of "socialism with a human face". Second, for both international and internal reasons, several socialist states chose during the early 1970s to try to bolster their institutionalization through revising their constitutions. Far from remaining an arid area of legalistic discussion, the constitutional amendments which were proposed in Poland in 1975 (and, it might be noted, in Yugoslavia in 1971) provoked extraordinary public intervention. The convergence of state interests and opposition interests in engaging in constitutional debate marked an unexpected and relatively unexplored transformation in both the technique of socialist state power and the nature of dissent.[10] In the Polish crucible, the opposition's acceptance of a *de jure* socialist legality facilitated its attack on the

9. Kolakowski, in *Pologne*, p. 92. See also the texts by Jacek Kuron and Michnik.

10. Laws in the Soviet Union and Yugoslasvia were used more severely than before against social offenders, yet the emphasis on formal legality was connected with liberalization in some quarters and the new Human Rights Committee in the Soviet Union found initial tolerance (1970). Cf. Rudolf Tökes, ed., *Dissent in the USSR* (Baltimore, 1975), pp. 56-61.

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state's *de facto* arbitrariness, chicanery, and irrationality.

Until 1976 the coalition of opposition movements lacked a mass base. Either because of its apparent weakness or because of its continued fragmentation — or perhaps merely because of its persistent isolation from ordinary people's sense of injustice — the opposition had failed to support the widespread workers' strikes in Gdansk, Szczecin, and other industrial centers in 1970-1. At that time, the workers' forceful initiative in the face of sudden drastic increases in food prices led to the replacement of Gomulka by Edward Gierek as first secretary of the PUWP and compromises — albeit short-lived — on the prices, on the representation of workers in new workers' councils and reformed trade unions, and on the production of consumer goods. The course of these strikes showed an interesting pattern of strength and weakness on both sides. On the side of the political leadership, the strikes first showed the possibility of cleavages which could be exploited by opposition forces. Then, during the negotiations which were carried out by the new party leadership and the striking workers of Szczecin, and even more during the repressive aftermath of 1971-2 (when the strike leaders were fired, harassed, intimidated, and forced to emigrate or died in mysterious circumstances),[11] the party showed the same resilience with which it had met previous uprisings. On the side of the workers, the strikes showed determination and militancy in the face of known repression and infiltration. Perhaps even more significant was the emergence, during the second wave of strikes in January 1971, of activist workers from outside the party ranks. Nevertheless, the workers could not prevent the suppression of the new workers' councils, the immobilization of possible trade union initiatives, and ultimately, after four years of relative affluence, the renewed imposition of price rises in consumer goods. When another round of strikes swept the industrial cities of Radom and Ursus in 1976, the state accelerated its repressive response by ordering the police to fire on demonstrators in the streets. The immediate victimization of masses of workers through illegal arrest, summary trials, coercive plea-bargaining, and stiff penalties (including forced labor and inflated fines to cover court costs)[12] created a practical opportunity to put the opposition movements' human rights issue into action. This actualization took the form of a new organization, the Committee for Workers' Defense (CWD), which was formed in September 1976 to provide legal and finanacial aid for the victims of arbitrary legal and extra-legal persecution. Significantly, the concrete support that the CWD was able to give workers who had not previously been drawn into opposition activities provided the basis for a mass movement. By September 1977, the CWD had attracted so many pleas for help and had handled so many formal cases of complaints and trials, involving all state agencies, that it was led to reformulate its role in an even wider way. During 1977, it had sponsored a hunger strike and suffered more arrests. Now known as the Committee for Social Self-Defense (CWD), the organization undertook formally "to fight against every form of repression for political, religious, or racial reasons, and to support persons persecuted under those headings; to fight against every violation of the law and to aid those who are so victimized; to fight for institutional respect for civil rights and liberties; to support and defend every social initiative which attempts to put into practice human rights and civil rights."[13]

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11. *Pologne*, pp. 64-65.
12. *Ibid.*, pp. 19-50.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 41. Note the similarity between this evolution of a workers' movement uniting material aid and civil rights demands, and "classical" workers' movements.

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So, by the end of the 1970s, the Polish opposition benefited from a two-tiered process which joined a rather elite group of organizers with a potential mass base. Just as intellectuals, bishops, and former Marxist activists were able to agree on a *modus operandi* through the broad issue of human rights, so the movements that they claimed to represent were able to mobilize the numerous Poles who suffered the concrete deprivations that the absence of such rights implies. Given the reversals suffered by single opposition groups in the 1956-68 period, it would seem that currents of dissent or waves of dissatisfaction can become a real opposition only by forging a cross-class alliance of this kind. Such alliances are rare, and sometimes exist more in myth than in fact. Curiously, not even the mass uprising of Polish October (1956) seems to have stimulated such an alliance,[14] and in Yugoslavia, the persecution of the journal *Praxis* and the group of its contributors known as "the Belgrade Eight" has also failed to ignite concern outside the narrow ranks of the intellectuals and the professors who were most involved in the case.

The facts of the case are already well known.[15] From 1972 to 1975, political leaders on various levels (from the presidency down to the city of Belgrade) called for the dismissal of the eight professors from their teaching positions at Belgrade University. No specific charges were brought against them, perhaps because of their international reputations, but they were criticized for the generally unsupportive tone of their writings. (This is called a "moral-political criterion.") While the departmental council managed to uphold them — with the support of the local LC organization, against the wishes of higher party organs — government bodies were able to revoke their passports; they were blacklisted from appearing in radio and television discussions; and they were not allowed to publish books and articles. After a prolonged series of inconclusive negotiations between professors, reorganized university governing bodies, and party and state leaders, the republican legislature of Serbia superseded both university autonomy and the autonomy of a self-managing unit and fired the eight professors and instructors. Other intellectuals and students, not included in the "Eight" and less widely known, were more severely punished. Several were jailed, their lawyers and friends harassed.

Yet the vagueness of their position — in terms of transgression as well as repression — underlines the differences between the exercise of state power and party power in Yugoslavia and in the East European socialist regimes. Over the past four years, the Belgrade Eight have never received written documentation of their legal status. Their salaries have been reduced to one-third the normal professorial level, but this remains an informal arrangement. They have been refused the certification of unemployment that would enable them to obtain other academic appointments in

14. "On the one hand, in certain regions where the movement was particularly strong (in Warsaw and also in certain industrial centers like Nowa Huta) the 'alliance of workers and intellectuals' was demonstrated despite conservative, anti-intellectual, and anti-reformist propaganda. On the other hand, in regions where the traditions of revolt were not part of the 'political culture' (Upper Silesia) the workers' reaction as negligible." Wlodzimierz Brus, "Les conséquences durables de l'Octobre polonais," in *1956 Varsovie-Budapest: La deuxième révolution d'Octobre*, ed. Pierre Kende and Krzystof Pomian (Paris, 1978), pp. 160-161. Alternatively, the "new working class" of the socialist scientific-technical intelligentsia employed in factories refused to join the strikes in Radom because they felt that the strikes were directed, in part, against their privileges. *Pologne*, p. 46.

15. Sher, *Praxis*, chapter 5; Sharon Zukin, "Introduction to the 'Belgrade Manifesto'," *Telos* 35 (Spring 1978); pp. 184-185, and "The Case of the 'Belgrade Eight'," in *Telos* 19 (Spring 1974), pp. 138-141.

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Yugoslavia. They are not permitted to "guest lecture" in that country, although they may accept appointments abroad. As a rule, the book manuscripts they have submitted to Yugoslav publishers have not been accepted; or, when the have, certain topics have been carefully excised. Several of their articles have been appearing in scholarly journals, but, again, informal controls limit the content. For example, editors are pleased to accept articles which deal with developments in social science but frown on articles dealing with Yugoslav problems. While they do not have any censorship code or prior censorship to which they must conform, the editors must send the first copy of every publication to the office of the local public prosecutor. The prosecutor may then decide to suppress distribution. Finally, the members of the Belgrade group are informally warned every few months that they stand in jeopardy of losing their salaries. This reminder of dependence on the political leadership is reinforced by the continued reference to the Belgrade professors in the mass media as enemies of Yugoslav society.

Though their own victimization by arbitrary legal processes has recently directed the Belgrade philosophers toward a more explicit concern with human and civil rights than they had ever expressed in the journal *Praxis*,[16] their situation is fundamentally different from that of their colleagues in Poland. Unlike social critics in Poland (and Hungary), the Belgrade group has neither emigrated nor for the most part gone to jail. They have made no links with other social groups or with the population at large, and, given the ideological consensus in favor of a liberal, consumer-oriented socialist regime and the institutional diffuseness of self-management, it would be difficult to find such groups. As we have seen, the only other group of critics with an alternative (at least in part) to the dominant ideology and an institutional base (from which they were, of course, driven) was comprised of the republican political leaders whose ideas were anathema to the *Praxis* group. So, despite the LYC's rejection of critics both within and outside the party, the party itself seems to present the only possible base for any kind of opposition or dissent. This contrasts with the situation in Poland and the other East European socialist regimes, where effective opposition and dissent seem to thrive only outside the party. The *Praxis* group also differs from the Polish opposition in that they reject institutional pluralism and are firmly committed to building a socialist culture. While a socialist culture, in their view, may be flawed by statism and consumerism, there is nothing "totalitarian" about it. In an event, the *Praxis* authors have never described themselves as an opposition so much as a conscience. Finally, the "reverse demonstration effect" of the repression of intellectual and cultural life in the East European socialist regimes has had a pacifying influence on must Yugoslav intellectuals. They have no *samizdat* publication networks, nor have they organized alternative schools such as the Polish "flying universities". (Word has leaked out, however, that a flying university has been organized in the last few months.) With the exception of the Belgrade group and their Zagreb antithesis among the Croatian nationalists, Yugoslavs are permitted both an intellectual life and an intellectual living. The informal pressures on their intellectual work inspire, for the most part, familiar

16. See the Belgrade *Praxis* Group, "The Meaning of the Struggle for Civil and Human Rights," *Telos* 35 (Spring 1978), pp. 187-191. This manifesto signals a new concern with the vocabulary of human rights and a new need to affirm civil liberties in Yugoslavia. While *Praxis* had always supported movements for humanistic socialism and the broadening of all social rights, these appeared in the other East European socialist societies (Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary).Yugoslavia's major problems —at least until the political-legal aftermath of the student movement of 1968 and the demonstrations of 1970-71 — seemed to lie more in the areas of etatism and individualism than in the area of civil rights as such.

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mechanisms of "coping" which are *not* tantamount to dissent. Nevertheless, Yugoslavs who take invasions of their freedom most critically resent being compared, favorably, to other East European countries. They direct their attention to the freedom which is possible and which is consonant with the official ideology of self-management, rather than to the tortuous struggles of Charter '77 in Prague or the Helsinki Agreement monitoring committee in Moscow.

Despite differences in their situations, social critics in all East European socialist societies have contributed to a fund of ideas, hypotheses, and metaphors which are relevant to the discussion of socialist development. Curiously, there is no single, undisputed theory among their writings which definitively either explains the structure of their own societies or analyzes the development process of a socialist society. Instead, their work runs to descriptive hypotheses about specific social formations, very general statements about universal human nature, and perhaps most efficaciously, the exposure of ideological and institutional myths. There are variations, of course, from society to society and through periods of time, in response to changes in social conditions. A careful survey of all all East European and Soviet opposition currents shows that the prevalent Western intellectual image of the "disillusioned" Marxist intellectual is too undifferentiated in terms of both place and time, and too simplistic a conception of critique, to explain the emergence and the persistence, the continuities and the discontinuities, of dissent and opposition in Eastern Europe. However, taking the roughly comparable groups of *Praxis* contributors and Polish Marxist critics, we can find some consistency in the fundamental query which motivates their critique. For the Yugoslavs, the basic question is : How could a revolution which was objectively so right (in the Soviet Union as well as in Yugoslavia) go so wrong? And the Poles, reflecting the problem of the genesis of the socialist regime in their country, ask: How could a good idea (i.e., Marxist social change) go so wrong?

In both societies, critical attention is drawn primarily to politics as a cause of failure. The Yugoslav critics find that, after the revolution, politics becomes a sphere of professionalism and alienation; the Poles see political institutions as the sort of totalizing institutions which destroy individual initiative and individual integrity. Interestingly, this concern with the "superstructure" of politics mirrors the East European socialist state's flexibility in regard to economic arrangements (e.g. in terms of abandoning — in Yugoslavia and, to a lesser degree, in Poland and Hungary — forced collectivization, permitting joint ventures with capitalist investors, instituting material incentives, etc.) and obstinacy in holding fast to political centralization and party control. While both Yugoslavs and Poles share the common East European critical emphasis on subjective analysis (rather than structuralist critique or analysis founded on objective factors), they remain more pragmatic and concrete about changing existing political institutions than, say, the Hungarians of the Budapest School.[17]

If politics in a socialist society becomes both dominant and alienating, then the Yugoslavs trace this failure to slippage between revolutionary theory and post-revolutionary practice. This has led, of course, to their keystone of *praxis*, and it has permitted them to posit a continuing "utopia" whch contrasts with the reality of

17. See Jeff Herf's review of Andras Hegedüs, *et al.*, *The Humanization of Socialism,* in *Telos* 35 (Spring 1978), pp. 238-243.

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Yugoslav socialism. But once that relation is understood, what have the *Praxis* philosophers contributed to a theoretical understanding of the dynamic tension that previous empirical hypotheses (notably, Milovan Djilas' "new class" idea and Michels' old Iron Law of Oligarchy) left unsaid? This is not to impugn the poignancy and the immediacy of the *Praxis* group's work — nor the moral courage it takes to maintain such a critical stance — but to question the possible theoretical evolution of their critique of bureaucracy, privilege, professional politics, and statism. On a practical level, the *Praxis* authors became increasingly critical of the party's authoritarianism after 1968. In that sense, both Yugoslav and Polish Marxists concluded around the same time that liberalization within the parameters of a socialist state ultimately founders on the absence of political democracy. However, while the Poles' preferences veered in the direction of a plurality of organized interest groups in Western sense (influenced, no doubt, by the plurality of existing opposition movements), the Yugoslavs remained committed to the same ideological and institutional sources which underlay the official system of self-management. Again in the common East European critical mode, the kind of self-management that the *Praxis* authors advocated would be more democratic and more rational than the system as it presently exists.[18]

Sher's book on the *Praxis* group presents the political history of the journal and the authors' collective odyssey, through their writings, from a critique of Stalinism in the Soviet Union to criticism of self-management as it has been applied in Yugoslavia, market socialism, and nationalist divisiveness. It is a sensible and sensitive political scientist's account, a case study of socialist criticism which evolves into dissent and is treated as opposition. As a case study, it is a useful and a necessary history. Nevertheless, the book's argument is rather limited. Sher's position is that, from the circumstances of its very founding, and despite its disclaimers, *Praxis* was a political phenomenon: first, as a continuation of a "Slavic" tradition of founding "thick journals" to express social criticism; second, as a form of discussing very political issues; third, as a vehicle for the classical (East European) critical intelligentsia. It is this third point, as well as the narrowness of the general thesis, which is contentious. Sher makes both more and less of the East European intelligentsia than it deserves. On the one hand, the history and the present situation of East European intellectuals are more varied and more ambiguous than he (and the Western authors on whom he relies) explains.[19] On the other hand, though Sher correctly alludes to the close ideological, social, and personal ties between the Yugoslav political elite and the critical intelligentsia,[20] he does not generalize from this and try to reach a more theoretical (even a critical) understanding of that relation in all post-revolutionary societies.that is part of the problem that a case study like this is not designed to answer: What kind of a Marxism is relevant to a post-revolutionary socialist society?

The collection of texts from the Polish opposition movements is obviously even less theoretical in its intent. The introduction and the brief editorial notes which introduce each piece are useful and factual, while the texts themselves are both concrete and

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18. Cf. Mihailo Markovic's "analytical groups and centers" (Sher, *Praxis*, p. 169) and Hegedüs and Markus' "humanizing communities" (Herf review, p. 242).

19. However Sher and the *Praxis* authors do recognize a difference between humanist intellectuals and technicians or scientists (Sher, *Praxis*, pp. 242ff and *passim*). Cf. Maria Hirszowicz, "Intelligentsia vs. Bureaucracy: The Revival of a Myth in Poland," *Soviet Studies* 30 (1978), pp. 336-361.

20. Sher even refers to this as a "semi-incestuous relationship" (more details, please!), p. 265 and *passim*.

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dramatic (especially Boris Sulik's account of the 1970-1 strikes in Szczecin, Jan Litynski's description of working-class conditions in Radom, and the eyewitness reports of demonstrators in the Radom strikes of 1976). The collection adequately represents the variety of the opposition groups who have formed a joint opposition movement and refers, as well, to the evolution from both Catholic "neo-positivism" and Marxist "revisionism" to pluralist opposition.

Nevertheless, the common metaphors which join the *Praxis* writings and the Polish texts suggest at least three interesting subjects for future analysis. First, the legal victimization of some individuals or groups, by accusing them of heinous social crimes, makes them "hostages" for the rest of the population;[21] consequently, a certain relation is established indirectly between the majority of the population and the state, which serves to isolate the victims from possible sympathizers and supporters. Second, certain relatively free areas of social activity, defined institutionally and often occupationally by the state, exist; but, in the sense of all "reservations," they can both liberate and alienate, isolate or engage the people within them.[22] Third, through the democratization of small areas of activity — workers' councils in Yugoslavia, civil rights movements in Poland — it is possible to create beachheads for the humanization of the entire socialist system; these areas of common endeavor become "islands" of freedom which conflict with the structure that surrounds them but they may eventually (in an unspecified way) come to alter that structure.[23] The interpretation and verification of the hypotheses that are bound up with these metaphors — hostages, reservations, and islands of freedom — necessarily imply the most interesting question. That is, after the revolution, does Marxism become a mere metaphor for both state power and its critique? The common elements of Yugoslav and Polish Marxist criticism strongly suggest that, after the economic reorganization of society, Marxism finds its real content in moral critique. Nationalization and nationalism aside, the goal which remains, as Kolakowski and Michnik say, is to "live in dignity," or to overcome, as Svetozar Stojanovic has described it, the moral tragedy of the professional revolutionary whose *praxis* ends with the taking of state power.

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21. *Pologne*, p. 37.
22. Sher, referring to the analysis of Milan Miric, *Praxis*, pp. 267-269.
23. *Pologne*, p. 15; Sher, *Praxis*, p. 260.

Simon Leys. *The Chairman's New Clothes*. New York: St. Martins Press, 1978.

Simon Leys. *Chinese Shadows*. Harmondsworth, England: Penguin, 1978.

The treatment accorded the writings of Simon Leys on China by the serious press around the world raises some serious questions not only about China, but about the responsibilities of both scholars and socialists. I shall return to this matter at the end, but first Leys himself. The greater part of *The Chairman's New Clothes* is a blow-by-blow account of the Cultural Revolution between February 1967 and October 1969. During this period the author was living in Hong Kong where he was able to follow events through the local Chinese-language press (pp.305-6) and encounters with Red Guards and others who came out of China, as well as from the major Peking

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sources, the *Renmin ribao* (People's Daily) and the monthly *Hongai* (Red Flag). This section contains many useful references and either translations or summaries of important documents. There is also an appendix of five pieces mainly concerning the affair of Peng Dehuai. The book begins with some fifty-four pages which attempt to define and put the Cultural Revolution into historical perspective, beginning with the "Hundred Flowers" movement of 1957 and the Great Leap Forward of 1958.

In a note which prefaces his second book Leys describes what led him to write *The Chairman's New Clothes*. "At first," he wrote, "I had the highest expectations for the Revolution with its stirring mobilization of youthful revolutionary fervor. But soon, alas and inevitably, it showed its real nature: neither revolutionary nor cultural, the movement ended up in ruthless military repression and the apotheosis of a semi-fascist, Lin Biao. Yet while it was going on, the Cultural Revolution, through both the official press and the organs of the various rebel-revolutionary groups, provided an unprecedented flow of information on the inner workings of the Maoist regime. Living among Chnese and on the very doorstep of China, subjected daily to a flood of fascinating political literature, orthodox and heretical, straight from the People's Republic, meeting young rebels and Red Guards who had just escaped from the military-bureaucratic repression, it was impossible to remain aloof from the political turmoil" (pp. ix-x).

The argument of the book is that the Cultural Revolution was essentially a personal struggle by Mao Zedong to regain the power that he lost at the Lushan meeting of the Central Committee in August 1959 following the debacle of the Great Leap Forward and the criticism of Marshall Peng Dehuai. From a nadir in 1960-62 Mao prepares, with the help of the newly promoted Lin Biao, Minister of National Defense, to use the army to effect a come-back. When the struggle finally breaks out in 1966, Mao uses the masses in order to bring down his adversaries. But his relation to the masses is similar to that of the Dowager Empress, Cixi, to the Boxers, and in the end they are little more than choir and claque. Mao is the villain, turning popular discontent with a system of which he was chief architect against those who challenged him. Having shown himself, in the Great Leap Forward, capable of sacrificing China for the system, now, in the Cultural Revolution, he showed that he could sacrifice the regime for himself. Having used the Red Guards, Mao abandoned them to military repression and restored the mandarins.

The essential weakness of all this is an underestimation of the real political-social differences which divided Mao from his fellow Party members and therefore a failure to examine seriously the alternatives which Mao was pressing in both 1958 and 1966. Coupled with a less strict definition of totalitarianism than he defends in his *Quadrant* article (see below), this leads to unhelpful and sometimes contradictory judgments of such key actors in the drama as Liu Shaozi, Chen Boda, Lin Biao and Zhou Enlai, all of whom are basically portrayed as lackeys of Mao. It also results in his throwaway reporting of a statement of Zhou Enlai's to Red Guards in September, 1966: their job was to overthrow individuals and not the system! Yet this statement embodies the nub of Mao's problem, the point he could not grasp and therefore never transcend.

Leys, according to his Foreward, sets out in *Chinese Shadows* to "complement" the writings of people like Edgar Snow, Han Suyin and J. K. Fairbank by "adding only some shadows without which even the most luminous portrait lacks depth". Switching to the musical metaphor he adds: "offering a few notes — in counterpoint." The problem the reader faces is to reconcile the two kinds of account, and here one must admit that neither side in this dispute is very helpful. Leys contents himself with

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beginning: "My aim was not to question the achievements of the Mao-Liu regime, which if not always so revolutionary as their Western supporters would claim, are still considerable in several fields" (p. xiii). (Note the tribute to Liu Shaoqi in this.)

The book begins with two long chapters showing the problems of the foreigner in China and justifying Leys' claim that basing themselves only on their *experiences* in China, foreigners can but write about "frivolities" and "shadow play". The observation is acute, but the tone is understandably bitter and sardonic, offensive to those for whom the profane has become sacred. In the chapters that follow Leys deals with problems he considers central to the "basic, permanent nature of the system": "class-struggle," bureaucracy, and cultural policy.

The real "class-struggle" for Leys is the feeling of we and they of the ordinary people, "they" being cadres, Party members and "the authorities". Leys considers the "leaders of China manipulate the people cynically" and that "the oppression and exploitation of the Chinese massess is too real, too deeply felt and universally experienced for the regime to claim that it does not exist." Hence the periodic encouragement to criticize (until it gets out of hand) and the provision of scapegoats (Liu Shaoqi, Lin Biao, the "gang of four"). But they must be criticized as individuals and separated from the *system* which Leys sees at fault, so therfore we have the fantastic stories about KMT-Soviet spies, or the watching of "dirty" movies in secret orgies. When combined with the power struggle this apparently cynical view has some force, but it requires filling out with much else if we are to understand the complexities of Chinese politics.[1]

Leys begins his chapter on bureaucrats with a quotation on social hierarchy dating from the sixth century B.C. He follows it with a devastatingly accurate picture of the "obsession for protocol" and "rigid classifications" of the social order which only the most obtuse foreign visitors could fail to notice. Leys notes: "Nothing, no futile detail is left to chance: the place of an official photograph in the newspaper, its size, the presence (or absence) of important persons in it, the order in which the names of leaders are given — all have meaning, all are organized more formally than any Byzantine ritual." Beneath the superficial, uniform poverty of China, the thirty-tiered hierarchy of bureaucrats enjoys status, money, better food (often by entertaining foreign visitors) and access to other goods and services "through the back door" (*zou hou men*). Leys suggests the name, "Those-who-ride-in-cars (official, of course), for this class. But he is aware that few of them could be said to *enjoy* power: their life is too precarious. Those whom another observor has parodied as "the poor and low middle bureaucrats" are "perpetually torn between the leaders and the led" and not unnaturally seek safety in "nonaction" which is their best chance of survival. This system which, like other systems elsewhere, guarantees a gerontocracy, broken only briefly by the "helicopter" bureaucrats of the Cultural Revolution now being "shot down" again, Leys shows to be also part of Yan'an tradition. He ends this chapter with an intersting extract from Wang Shiwei, a revolutionary whom others than the present Chinese leadership prefer to forget.

Leys deals with cultural policy in chapter 6, Cultural Life, but the theme recurs repeatedly in other chapters. This, and the stand he takes, is not surprising for someone whose professional training and interest is in the history of art and

1. One useful book here is Bill Brugger, *Contemporary China* (1977). Others include J.W. Lewis, ed., *Party Leadership and Revolutionary Power in China* (1970) and S.R. Schram, ed., *Authority, Participation and Cultural Change in China* (1973).

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archaeology. He begins the chapter with a quotation from George Orwell on "a nightmare world in which the Leader, or some ruling clique, controls not only the future, but the past. If the Leader says of such and such an event, "It never happened" — well, it never happened. If he says that two and two are five — well, two and two are five..." Leys then describes how the Cultural Revolution, the latest "aggression against culture," silenced the intelligentsia, closed libraries, denuded bookshops and theatres and cinemas, leaving people with a mixture of technical books, Mao's writings, and the handful of opera-cum-ballets approved by Jiang Qing. All this Leys sees as the logical outcome of "the death warrant of Chinese intellectual life," the speech on literature and art given in Yan'an in 1942. Leys skillfully counterposes an extract from *Literature and Art of Guangdong* (1973), soliciting manuscripts, with one from Lu Xun in which that splendid writer castigates "revolutionary" writing where the "celebration and exaltation of revolution is nothing but celebration of those who are in power". He makes a good point about the irony of more people able to read with less around for them to read. And there is also truth in his allegations about provision of ancient culture for the foreigner while denying it to "the masses" at home. Archaeology is, as he repeats, good foreign policy. But again the problem is more complex and what we need is to look at both the sunshine and the shadow with, to paraphrase a Cultural Revolution slogan, "socialism in mind".[2] One reading of Mao's Yan'an *Talks* concerns the problem of developing a literature which ordinary workers and peasants can and will read. The morphemic script of Chinese lends this an added dimension, not to mention dialect differences and those of social class. Leys' justified revulsion to kitsch, that "petty-bourgeois flim-flam" which is not confined to those "totalitarian regimes" which he identifies, hints at another aspect of the problem we should study.

Leys first visited China as a young man in 1955. Returning in 1972 he was struck, at the "visual, superficial" level, as others have been since, by the impression of poverty. In 1955, everything seemed new, full of youth and life, and now everything seems old, run-down, ramshackle. To what extent this is due to the cult of poverty encouraged during the Cultural Revolution is uncertain, for it is noticeable even with workers' dwellings built after that and but a year or so old. As for the ancient buildings with whose history Leys is so obviously familiar, their fate ranges from destruction through various stages of neglect to the most painstaking and expensive restoration. At one point Leys claims: "Some may argue that modern China can well do without its Daoist temples and that it is healthy for China to be rid of them. Without subscribing fully to this opinion, I am aware of the excellent arguments supporting it. It is not the transformation of temples into barracks (or factory warehouses — RB) that angers me, but the lies surrounding such an act, and the efforts made to disseminate those lies in the west..." But in other places Leys is the fanatical conservationist, noting evidence of Red Guards' destruction, bureaucratic stupidity (e.g. in destroying the city gates in Peking) and lack of care. Given the difficulty of finding many of the places he mentions, it would be surprising if he were always right as to their fate.

Finally, mention should be made of the lighter touches which enliven this book. There is the sketch of the former Astor Hotel in Tianjin, now replete with "socialist plumbing". But the one I like best, and which I read recently *in situ*, is that of the hotel for foreigners at the model village (former?) of Dazhai where "international

2. Cf. Lin Biao's injunction to Red Guards to study Chairman Mao's works with "problems in mind."

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capitalists and other tourists who "do" China are like Marie Antoinette playing at being shepherdess;" and where there are "subtle rustic touches": "in the usual vast array of dishes, some dissonant notes are skillfully struck — a dozen hard-boiled eggs on a tin plate here, a bowl of gruel there. . ." It is not kind, but it is an aspect of the truth which has to be faced and *socialistically* evaluated.

In 1978 our author turned editor and produced the special China issue of the Sydney periodical, *Quadrant*. Its vermillion cover is provocatively adorned with Mao's calligraphy which the contents' page tells us means: "be verification of the facts, get at the truth; strive to eliminate all empty talk". Leys' Foreword claims purality, but "soundness and reliability of their information" for the contributors and defends those which might appear "polemical and controversial" with the assertion that "truth is always revolutionary'. The "Peking view" he leaves to "the Chinese Embassy" and "some of our prominent China scholars".

Leys own article is titled "Human Rights in China". It begins with quotations from Kolakowski and Orwell on totalitarianism. For the former it is a political system "where all social ties have been entirely replaced by State-imposed organisations". His quotation from Orwell is that used in *China Shadows* and leads Leys into an interesting discussion of how victims of the Nazi concentration camps reacted to criticisms of their oppressors, based on Bruno Bettelheim's *The Informed Heart*. This he follows with the extraordinary picture of Mao's funeral meeting, with reproductions of both original and doctored versions. His list of the victims of oppression from 1949 onwards does not make clear the distinction between death and other forms of "violence and bloodshed" nor between the rights and wrongs of punishment. As always with Leys, sympathy for the common man and a facility with words preclude a reasoned case. The article ends with a sharply drawn picture of the various "methods which have been used in the West to dodge the issue of human rights in China".

Contributors to the issue include the Dalai Lama on Tibet; Audrey Donnithorne on the control of inflation; Parris Chang on "de-Maoisation"; Joffe on the army; Australian journalist, Yvonne Preston on "Australian public opinion and China"; R.A. Scalapino on "China, Taiwan and American credibility"; and the recently exiled writer, Chen Jo-hsi's short story: "Nixon's Press Corps". For me the most important pieces were those by D.S. Zagoria and the Londons, Miriam and Ivan. The former is a quietly reasoned analysis of what the author calls five "new myths about China," which first appeared in the New York *Dissent* (Spring, 1975). These include: "The Maoist system involves a great deal of mass participation by ordinary workers and peasants, and Maoist values have gained widespread acceptance among the Chinese people. The Chinese development path has avoided great costs and suffering to the Chinese people." The Londons' article, reproduced from *Worldview* (1976, Vol. 19, Nos. 5, 6, 7-8), is a horrifying account of conditions during the famine years of 1960-62 culled from lengthy interviews in Hong Kong. There is a sensitive discussion of the validity of such interviews — cf. Leys own comment on interviews in *Chinese Shadows*.

Leys is a provocative writer on a subject especially provocative to the Left. An example of how not to respond to his work is provided by Edward Friedman, an American China scholar, in a recent article in the *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars*.[3] For Friedman, Leys has offered only "ill-informed and malevolent

3. Edward Friedman, "Simon Leys hates China; America loves Simon Leysm," *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars*, 10:3 (1978), pp. 19-27.

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polemics," while Friedman himself devotes but one paragraph to China's being "vulnerable on human rights". But Leys cannot be so easily dismissed, particularly by socialists. Friedman writes that Leys' purpose is to "ridicule others who go to see or understand the complex meaning of the Chinese revolution. He has no sympathy for the difficulties inherent in that task...He is, Leys tells us, a former lover of the revolution who has become disenchanted. What could be said about those who first trumpeted and then hated the Bolshevik revolution can be said about Leys". I am not sure I understand this final sentence, but what Leys actually says in this connection is that "until 1966...I confidently extended to the Maoist regime the same sympathy I felt for all things Chinese, without giving it more specific thought". The point is that Leys' *condemnation* rather than ridicule is for those who should have known better; whose reports have fed yet another generation of radicals and socialists a simplistic, unreal dream.

Friedman charges that Leys writes in order to discredit the Chinese revolution, leaving "no positive image" in the wake. But as so often happens, this is exactly what Friedman does to Leys' accounts. Against such *ad hominem* methods, I would suggest that satire, the emotive pamphlet on a limited theme, or subjective impressions are all legitimate techniques of analysis proveded the author does not pretend they are other than that (and Leys does not), or willfully falsify the record (which, contrary to Friedman, I do not believe Leys does). Only a variety of styles and points of view will aid in thrashing out the truth and with it a socialist approach to China. To warn, as one Chinese official did to Leys, against "hurting China," or to speak, as Friedman's title does, of "hating China," will not get us far. Both make the pathetic identification of country, people, and government which blocks critical thought. Leys' writings on China are emotional and as I have tried to suggest not without flaws in matters of detail and approach, but they can provoke. So far, unfortunately, they have provoked little more than the face-saving paragraph here and there. The question arises: when will the radical Left admit that in the so-called socialist countries there are new, oppressive classes and a large mass of less-than-convinced supporters of the system? This, perhaps more than the successes, needs theorizing if we are to achieve real socialism anywhere in the world.

Ronald Bain

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